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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PLANNING FOR EDUCATION IN ALBERTA: A CASE STUDY

BY

JACQUELINE A. GEE ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Education

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Edmonton, Alberta
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DEGREE: Doctor of Education

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, Ina Dora Baxter, a wise and loving teacher, who encouraged my pursuit of learning and gently guided me into a career in education where she knew I would thrive and grow.

ABSTRACT

In 1984, Alberta Education presented a four year plan for education in the province. In 1989, a local Board of Education approved the first edition of a five year strategic plan for the district. In 1992, a high school embarked on the first school based strategic planning in the school system. This dissertation explored planning for change in education at three levels: the province, school district, and school. The major research question asked, "What significance does stakeholder involvement in planning for change have for the organization, the individuals involved, and the planning process"? A second question emerged during the inquiry; "What factors influence the involvement of stakeholders in planning for change in the educational organizations"?

The philosophical framework included aspects of the rationalistic and interpretative research philosophies. A case study methodology was used. The conceptual framework emphasized school-based planning as the nucleus of the study. The planning methodology, the stakeholders involved, the resources, and the planning product, were addressed in order to consider the significance of stakeholder participation and contribution.

The findings and conclusions responded to the two major questions identified. At the provincial level, the key factors influencing the involvement of stakeholders in planning were found to be the role of the organization and the planning strategy selected. At the district and school levels, although there were several secondary factors, the key factor in influencing the involvement of stakeholders was the selection of a strategic planning methodology. The significance of stakeholder involvement in planning appeared to be different for each organization. For Alberta Education, "focal" stakeholder involvement was not identified as an aspect of the planning strategy being used. The findings revealed that a shift had occurred in the way stakeholders were viewed and utilized in planning for change in education. For the district, the involvement of stakeholders influenced the individuals participating in the planning, the way the

district was received, and the value attached to the planning methodology. For the school, stakeholder involvement significantly influenced the personal beliefs and attitudes of the participants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to a number of people who, directly or indirectly, have travelled this research journey with me. In particular, I extend special thanks to my advisor, Dr. D. A. MacKay, whose wisdom, wit, and friendship have sustained me from the very beginning of my doctoral studies. I also want to thank Drs. M. Horowitz and K. Ward for their supervisory guidance and support; Drs. E. Young, L. Beauchamp and J. A. Riffel for their participation and advice as members of my Examining Committee; and Dr. E. Holdaway for his diligent instruction to graduate students in candidacy preparation.

I would also like to recognize and thank the many individuals in the three organizations involved in the study whose willing participation made this dissertation possible; my friends and colleagues in the Instructional Services Department of Strathcona County Schools for their on-going interest and encouragement; my colleague, Warren, for his assistance as dependability auditor; my friend, Ruth, beginning her own doctoral research journey, for her empathy and support; and Tracey Kremer, for her excellent word processing skills.

Finally, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my family; my husband and editor, Tom, for his patience and encouragement; my sons, Darren and Michael, who have endured and respected my commitment to my career and professional studies for many years; and to Angela and Pam for their interest and support.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

During the course of the past 10 years, much has been stated about the increasing rate of change, and the resultant trauma for individuals in their personal and professional lives (Corbin, 1986). Henchey (1986) identified six trends in Canada that were important in their impact and pervasive in their influence: the technological revolution, increasing competition, economic turbulence, demands for accountability, transformation of knowledge, and cultural pluralism. In a 1990 research study, Kodak Canada priorized the five problems that Canada must address: the deficit, a protectionist mindset, an uncompetitive service sector, unsupportive government policies, and poorly trained workers and managers (Rugman & D'Cruz, p. 51). Their recommendations for a competitive future for Canada emphasized the need for

> organizational learning . . . a philosophy that encourages continuous improvement of the individual and collective capabilities of all the human resources in the business . . . a mindset that encourages and seeks change, that champions initiative, . . . that includes a willingness to accept personal responsibilities associated with change. (p. 46)

Based on research conducted over the last fifteen years by the Cambridge Management Group in the United States, Cook (1989) suggested "there are four kinds of change irresistibly and traumatically affecting public education" (p. 13). He believed that radical changes in demographics, economic transitions, transformation of mainstream values, and global competition, if taken together, amount to a state of crisis, and create an "unparalleled demand for education that is forcing education into the competition of the free market" (p. 62). Kodak Canada reported, "It is clear that if Canadians in all sectors of our society and all regions of Canada do not pull together to seize the competitive challenges facing us and pull this country's economy into fast forward, we will be unable to maintain our current standard of living" (Rugman & D'Cruz, 1991, p. 2). In the midst of political issues of sovereignty and decentralization, globalization of the economy and declining national resources, an image of education as the saviour of society's woes was being conjured in the political arena. From a negative perspective, this image could have been construed as one of a scapegoat. However interpreted, the image resulted in increased demands upon the education system for bigger, better and faster results. Optimistically, the opportunity presented to education, that of becoming "the major public agenda item into the 21st century," was not one to be shirked (Cetron, 1991, p. 54).

Educators and policy makers alike were seriously considering what organizational and instructional changes were necessary to provide appropriate and relevant learning opportunities for present and future students. Too often in response to environmental pressures, policy makers planned and "introduce (d) changes without providing the means to identify and confront the situational constraints and without attempting to understand the values, ideas, and experiences of those who are essential for implementing any changes" (Fullan, 1991, p. 96). What approaches to educational planning for organizational and instructional change attempted to deal with situational constraints and consider the ideas and experiences of the implementers?

Patterson, Purkey and Parker (1986) conjectured that organizations do not follow an orderly logic, but a complex one often paradoxical and contradictory but they are still "understandable and amenable to influence" (p. 61). Fullan (1991) argued that "it might be more useful to accept the nonrational quality of social systems and move on from there" (p. 97). Patterson, Purkey and Parker (1986) offered strategic planning as an appropriate approach for the nonrational world of school systems:

> The goal of strategic planning is to produce a stream of wise decisions designed to achieve the mission of the organization. Emphasis shifts from product to process. Just as the planning process builds in flexibility for adaptation to changing conditions in and out of the organization, it also accepts the possibility that the final product may not resemble what was initially intended. (p. 61)

The Allstate Forum on Public Issues report, *Labor Force 2000*, released in the United States in 1989, suggested that education borrow strategic planning techniques familiar to business so as to create a "shared vision through which the different members of the school system can visualize the same image of the school" (p. 4). In the province of Alberta, a major educational reform movement was initiated in the early 1980's following the appointment of a new Deputy Minister of Education and in conjunction with a series of political, economic and social changes occurring in the province at that time. Two primary beliefs are said to have influenced these educational reform initiatives: "first, that education is a purposeful endeavour; and second, that a reaffirmation of the student as the central reason for educational efforts was required" (Zatko, 1990, p. 2). The approach to reform consisted of several phases: "first, establishing general directions; second, building the infrastructure for reform; third, implementing changes; fourth, assessing the impact; and fifth, modifying policies and strategies as appropriate" (Zatko, p. 2).

In 1989, the Board of Education of a local school district set out to implement a new, collaborative, planning approach that had the potential to extend to each school community if so desired. The Board and its Superintendent, seemingly operating from the belief that change requires a structure "wherein individuals can rationally attempt to communicate wants and needs without distortion and be instrumental in the participatory development of an educational institution," realized that the long-range planning approach in place did not afford adequate management of the changes resulting from school, district, provincial and national environs (Foster, 1986, p. 167).

Context of the Study

Within the provincial education environment, four major components of reform were identified and initiated at different times relative to the political, financial, and educational opportunities available. These components were: a ten year plan for the management and financing of education; new legislation for the governance of education and a Council on Alberta Teaching Standards; a major review of the Secondary School

Program of Studies and the development of the Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations provided by the province; and additional projects that supported the direction of the reform such as the national School Achievement Indicators Project, the provincial Educational Quality Indicators Project, a review of Special Education policies and student outcomes (Zatko, pp. 3-14).

To operationalize the provincial reform movement, a strong emphasis was placed on "education as the result achieved" as opposed to the "education as the process of learning." This approach bore some resemblance to what Freeman (1984) termed "ends planning" or the strategy "backmapping." "Ends planning" is defined as the "exclusive focus on what you want to happen—a future result or expectation," an activity that "does not allow for discussion or debate on how to reach the desired future" (p. 204). "Backmapping" is a process whereby an organizational staff worked backwards from the product due in 15 or 20 years to what could be done the following year (p. 227).

In 1990, the Board of Education of the school district approved the first edition of a five year strategic plan. This policy document was the result of an extensive strategic planning approach involving in excess of 200 individuals including representation from elected officials, business, industry, parents, staff, administration, and Alberta Education. The Cambridge Management Concept of Strategic Planning, adopted by the Board of Education after a year and a half of searching, was used. This planning methodology combined both a process and a discipline which was purported to produce "a plan characterized by originality, vision, and realism" (Cook, p. 82). Cook's strategic planning discipline

> includes the vital components of the plan itself; the process is the organizational dynamic through which the vital components are derived. Both the discipline and the process are aimed at the means by which an organization constantly recreates itself to achieve extraordinary purpose. (p. 82)

The senior administration of the school jurisdiction had supported a gradual shift from a centralized form of decision-making to one of more responsibility and accountability at the school level. School principals had been encouraged to plan and initiate pilot projects that exercised their autonomy and extended decision-making to the school level. The development of school-based strategic plans was a logical next step for schools in the district. School plans are intended to promote responsible autonomy by enabling people at the school level to develop expertise in the planning process, to better understand the system goals, and to focus on issues to be addressed at their school (Cook, p. 159).

To this end, in the 1991-92 school term, the principal of a high school in the school district embarked on the first instance of school-specific strategic planning in the school system. The planning team was a microcosm of the school community. The principal hired two facilitators, one from inside the school and one from the district, to lead the team through a process to define the mission of the school, identify the issues critical to the school, develop suitable objectives to address those issues, and outline strategies by which the objectives would be attained and progress towards the mission achieved. Subsequently, action teams were formed to develop action plans to guide the achievement of each strategy. Near the end of the school year, parts of the plan were presented to the entire school staff and accepted for action the next fall. With the pressures of district initiatives, new curricula, and a new school plan, the principal was unable to get an action team leader for one of the objectives and so proceeded with three of the four action plans.

It is important to note here that the school strategic planning project and the inquiry into the project were initiated by the researcher in discussion with the school principal. The nature of the relationship between the principal and researcher was such that the principal should have felt no obligation to become involved in either the planning initiative or the study unless he so desired. Although ethical considerations were a concern, initially, they were outweighed by the potential benefits of the study.

In an administrative position, the researcher worked supportively with the school principals to motivate, facilitate, and create processes for change that would result in improved alternatives for the delivery of programs to students. Six years in a senior administrative position, preceded by six years in a similar administrative position in a smaller school system in Alberta, had afforded the researcher extensive knowledge of the "technical, political, and cultural" aspects of planning for change in schools and school systems (House, 1981, p. 16). That knowledge, the relationship with principals, and the understanding of the provincial educational context, made the author a "smart research instrument" and minimized the "tuning in and breaking through" aspects of research in this particular study (Guba and Lincoln, 1981, p. 102).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this case study was to explore aspects of planning for change within one high school, one school district and one provincial department of education. The major research question to guide the study asked, "What significance does stakeholder involvement in planning for change have for the organization, the individuals involved, and the planning process"? Specific questions included:

1. What were the general perceptions of stakeholder participants about the planning for change that had occurred in the organization in the past?
2. What aspects of the planning methodology did participants perceive to be particularly challenging or frustrating?
3. What were the strengths and weaknesses of the planning methodology as perceived by the participants?
4. How effective was the planning process perceived to be in encouraging participating stakeholders to bring forward their concerns and contribute their ideas and expertise?
5. What did participants perceive to be their effect on the planning process?
6. What effect did participants perceive that the district's plan and planning processes had on the school planning process? What effect did participants

perceive that the provincial plan and planning process had on the school planning process?

7. Was shared leadership and decision-making perceived to be a part of the planning process? If so, in what ways?

Significance of the Study

This study was significant for several theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, there was a need to explore the use of the process referred to as strategic planning at different levels of educational planning. Where instances of school strategic planning had occurred, it did not appear that the district had established a similar planning methodology for a district plan. Where districts had utilized a strategic planning process, their schools did not appear to be using the same method. It was important also to consider the similarities and differences between the planning of the school, the school jurisdiction, and the provincial department of education.

There was a practical need to describe and evaluate structures new to education that effectively engage members of the student body, staff, parents, and community in collaborative reflection and examination of the appropriateness and relevancy of the institution and its delivery system. The study provides useful information about planning and self-management at the school level and the context in which it occurs, and about stakeholder perception of involvement and acceptance of planned change at the district and provincial levels of educational planning. Learning more about shared leadership and decision-making as an integral part of planning has some practical application for future planning activities at the provincial, district and school levels.

Definition of Terms

There are several terms in the study that are used differently in the literature depending on the context in which they appear. A definition or explanation for each in this particular context will assist in common understanding:

Planning is defined by Peterson (1980) as "a conscious process by which an institution assesses its current state and the likely future condition of its environment, identifies possible future states for itself, and then develops organizational strategies, policies, and procedures for selecting and getting to one or more of them" (in Jacobson & Conway, ed., 1990, p. 114).

Strategic Planning is defined as the "means by which an organization constantly recreates itself to achieve extraordinary purpose" (Cook, p. 74). It is also defined as "a process for helping school systems impart their future and, through techniques associated with bounded rationality, its leaders can effectively adjust to the process of change; in this context, change refers to new educational policies" (Carlson & Awkerman, eds., 1991, p. 168).

Stakeholder, as defined by Mitroff (1983), is "a distinct and distinguishable entity that has resources, purposes, and a will of its own" and is a claimant on an organization's effectiveness"(p.43) . As defined more specifically by the author, a stakeholder is an individual who, or group which, can affect or is affected by the actions and/or decisions of an institution or organization.

Restructuring is defined as "altering systems of rules, roles, and relationships so that schools can serve existing purposes more effectively or serve new purposes altogether" (Schlechty, 1990, p. xvi).

Shared leadership and decision-making is defined by the author as the involvement of stakeholders in the actions and decisions of leading.

Participative decision-making is defined as the mode of operation wherein decisions as to the activities to be implemented were arrived at by those who were to execute the decisions (Conway, 1984).

Results-based education is defined by Alberta Education as the result achieved from education, the learning that takes root when the process has been effective (Zatko, p. 3).

Delimitations and Limitations

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to the inquiry into a planning methodology in one high school within the context of the governing district and province.
2. The study was also delimited to data collection from representatives of the internal and external stakeholders of each of the three organizations.
3. A third delimitation was the time frame for the study which was from the time of approval to proceed in January, 1992 to December, 1992.

Limitations

1. The time frame of the study was also a limitation in that the implementation of any results of the planning were not yet evident at the time of data collection.
2. The involvement of a collaborative researcher who was a member of the senior administrative team in a school district, was seen as a possible limitation on the study.
3. Lastly, the transferability of the results of the study are limited by situational factors that include (a) the interaction between the district and the school, (b) the district approach to planning, (c) school personnel awareness of the planning methodology and (d) the provincial context.

Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the study, briefly highlighting the conditions and trends relative to education in North America, the province of Alberta, and the school district. It described the organizational and the planning settings of the provincial department of education, the school district, and the school. The main research problem and related specific questions to be addressed in the study were stated and the significance of the study explained. Several terms used consistently in the study have been defined and the delimitations and limitations identified. Literature that has enlightened the educational backdrop to the study has been referenced in this chapter rather than in the literature review in Chapter Two.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Concepts relating to the topics of organizational change, innovation and restructuring, leadership, and collaborative research methodology are inherent in a study about strategic planning for change. There are many areas in the literature relevant to these topics. Havelock (1968) identified over 4000 studies in the area of innovation alone, and admitted he had probably missed as many. More recent and specific, Van Meter revealed approximately 900 titles in a selected bibliography of studies on Educational Change in the United States (in Peters, 1986, p. 19). The literature on the nature of research itself is abundant and naturally relevant to most studies. A first attempt to organize a literature review appropriate to a study on school based planning revealed a preponderance of literature in such areas as innovation and change, planned change, organizational change, leadership, leader behaviour, educational theory and practice, and research. An analysis of the literature reviews afforded further delimiting of topics to those most pertinent to the study: organizational change, restructuring, strategic planning in education, leadership in change, and educational theory and research methodology. Only the literature on research methodology relevant to this case study has been referenced in this review.

Organizational Change

Prior to a review of pertinent literature on organizational change, attention to the variation of views on the nature of organizations may be useful. Almost fifteen years ago, Wise (1977) posited that more rational theories of education would do little good because schools are like other social organizations and do not operate in a vacuum (cited in Fullan, p. 97). At approximately the same time, Weick developed the idea of loose coupling between organizational subsystems but was still working from within the hierarchical structure (in Foster, 1986, p. 129). Sergiovanni (1984) talked about the concept of "loose connectedness" in successful private sector organizations (p. 6). A few years later, a recognition of the political dimensions of an organization and the incorporation of the concepts of leadership developed (Foster, p. 137). Organizational theorists recognized three aspects of organizations that are significant, "organizations are made up of individuals, and of collectivities, and both exist within a social context" (Foster, p. 138).

Whyte and Blasi identified three possible models of organizing: authoritarian, bargaining, and community democracy; Siranni expanded upon their approach when he suggested that perhaps our society needs "a plurality of organizational forms" (in Foster, p. 199). If the concept of community democracy is extended to education, working with students, teachers, community, culture, and organization is "praxis oriented toward sharing power, leadership and effecting change" (p. 200).

As the understanding of interaction within organizations became evident in the research, so too did the appreciation of change as a process within an organization. Hansen (1979) identified three different types of change presented in the literature: planned change, spontaneous change, and evolutionary change. He defined planned change as a "conscious and deliberate attempt to manage events so that the outcome is directed by design to some predetermined end" and referred to the cornerstones of planned change as understanding the technology of the change, the environment of the change, and the strategy for change. He stated that "The trick is to identify a specific strategy for implementing a specific innovation in a specific organizational environment" (p. 293). Roseblum and Louis (1981) described two approaches to the study of organizational change: a rational, manageable process whereby change results from a deliberate, planned methodology; and a natural systems perspective which allows for inclusion of non-rational factors such as norms, beliefs and organizational practices, and may be less amenable to a planned process. They believed the development of a change theory requires the integration of both approaches (p. 21).

Tichy (1985) approached organizational change from the perspective of three interrelated cycles based on the" dynamics of social systems surviving and making cyclical adjustments over time" (p. 165). He purported that the cycles result from three problems: technical design problems wherein "the social and technical resources must be arranged so the organization produces the desired output"; political allocation problems or "the problem of allocating power and resources"; and ideological and cultural problems which is the determination of "what values need to be held by what people" (p. 165). Tichy stated that technical uncertainty occurs when the organization is faced with less information than it needs to make decisions as a result of rapid changes in the environment, complex tasks, and highly interdependent tasks" (p. 166). Political uncertainty occurs when there is uncertainty over "who has the power to allocate rewards and to decide on the goals of the organization" (p. 167). Cultural uncertainty is related to "differences among organization members with regard to their values and ideology" (p. 167). Tichy (1985) submitted that the management of change requires "predicting, channeling, guiding, and altering the three cycles" and change management needs to be built on a "deeper awareness of organizational cycles" (p. 175).

Restructuring

A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century, issued by the Carnegie Forum on Education, called for "radical new structure of public education" and for "schools to meet far more demanding standards in the future" (McCormick, 1986, p. 29). The report prescribed an eight point action plan including (a) restructuring the schools to provide a professional environment for teaching, freeing them to decide how best to meet the state and local goals for children while holding them accountable for student progress, and (b) restructuring the teaching force, introducing a new category of lead teachers with proven ability to provide active leadership in the redesign of schools and in helping their colleagues to uphold high standards of learning and teaching (p. 29).

A review of recent trends in Canada done by Leithwood and Begley in 1986 described "increased centralization in most provinces, especially in the areas of curriculum and testing, but also a trend to school-based planning and participative decision-making" (in Caldwell et al., 1988, p. 1). Ransom and Tomlinson (1986) stated that in England and Wales, "the traditional balance of autonomy, power and accountability in education is also being redefined" (in Caldwell, p. 2). Rice (1991) described the major theme of restructuring in New South Wales, Australia as "the shift in power and focus to the local level through the devolution to the local school communities of responsibility for aspects of school governance and management that were previously the preserve of centralized state bureaucracies" (p. 1). A decentralizing trend is evident in several European countries: in France, where the Decentralization Act has encouraged more decision-making at the school level; in Italy, where boards of education have been set up to encourage decentralized initiatives focusing on local needs while maintaining a centralized approach to overall policy; in the Netherlands where the administrative system is reported as a rare mixture of a large degree of decentralization and a large degree of strict directives from the state (in Caldwell, p. 2).

Schlechty (1990) enhanced the understanding of restructuring when he noted the need for invention—the invention of new ways of thinking about the schools and of organizing them to reach students more effectively. He believed the key lies in reformulation of purpose and the creation of a vision of schools consistent with purpose. Kirschner viewed restructuring as "deep commitment projects" (in Lieberman & Miller, 1990, p. 759). Lieberman and Miller felt the restructuring movement was distinguished from other school reform by the understanding that "it is necessary to create the conditions that will enable teachers to accomplish the desired outcomes" (1990, p. 763). They emphasized an heuristic approach to restructuring to include significant values or beliefs, procedural means to accomplish them, and an organizational structure to provide support and learning (p. 760).

Sykes and Elmore (1988) viewed restructuring efforts as the latest in a long line of efforts to remake institutions and emphasized their need to serve a definite purpose (p. 1). They felt "Research should begin to create roles and structures that support and encourage the educational practices we want" (p. 5). They were also of the opinion that "very little work has been done to define the possible ways in which competing theories of good instructional practice could be translated into different organizational structures" (p. 20).

The study of comprehensive reform appears to have taken two different forms. One form related to "intensification"; the increased definition of curriculum, textbooks, tests, teacher and administrative methods (Fullan, p. 7). Fullan described the other as relating mainly to school-based management; enhanced roles for decision making, supporting collaborative work cultures, new roles such as mentors and teacher leaders, and the developing of shared mission and goals of the school among teachers, administrators, community and students (p. 7). Brown (1990) conducted a multi-year study investigating centralized and decentralized districts and found two main dimensions of decentralization: location of authority/responsibility, and the scope of decision-making accorded to schools. School-based management was characterized by two key processes: one was resource allocation in the form of dollars disbursed to schools and the other was a budgetary planning and review process (p. 8). Fullan (1991) believed that "Neither centralization nor decentralization really works. What does work is interactive pressure and support, initiative taking, and empowerment through coordinated action" (p. 211). For Conley and Bacharach (1990), the central issue in school-site management was not how to achieve school-site management but how to achieve collegial and collective management at the school level (p. 540).

Cuban (1988) categorized changes in schools as first and second order changes. He said first order changes "are those that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of what is currently being done. Second order changes seek to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations are put together, including new goals, structures, and roles" (p. 342). It was Cuban's opinion that second order reforms largely failed (p. 343). Sarason (1990) believed we will never truly restructure education until policy-makers are willing to "restructure their own strategies for bringing about productive education improvements" (p. 88).

More specific to the development and effect of goals for the school, Huberman and Miles, and Gross and associates, found that abstract goals, intended for teacher implementation, resulted in frustration, anxiety, and confusion (in Fullan, p. 35). Fullan stated:

> The challenge of the 90's will be to deal with more second order changes that affect the culture and structure of schools, restructuring roles and reorganizing responsibilities, including those of students and parents. (p. 29)

More recently, Carl Glickman (1993) observed "we are now in a peculiar time of seeing districts, state boards and legislators mandating site-based decision-making; the form, purpose, and composition of school councils, and innovative curriculum, and pedagogical and organization change" (p. 88). He suggested that what really is required is "a vision of learning, examples of restructuring of education at the school level to achieve the vision" and a coordinated plan at the local, state, and national levels for "inviting and assisting schools and districts to take choice, responsibility and accountability for their own efforts" (p. 88).

Strategic Planning

The literature on the use of strategic planning in education focuses mainly on the rationale, development, and adaptation of "models." Drucker (1980) believed strategic planning "aims to exploit the new and different opportunities of tomorrow" while long-range planning tries to optimize for tomorrow the trends of today (p. 61). Jones (1990) defined strategic planning as

> the process of attempting to accrue resources more quickly than they are depleted. In higher education, these resources are students, money, good will, and any other entities relevant to the academia. Strategic planning is also the willingness to make decisions in the present that will affect the future; in essence, we are attempting to create the future rather than let it happen to us. (p. 52)

The strategic planning process was defined by Lyles and Lenz as the set of human interactions, formal and informal, that take place in the course of generating a strategic plan (in Wang, 1991, p. 12).

Futurist Marvin Cetron (1991) offered at least four benefits of strategic planning: it forces us to pay greater attention to the future implications of today's decisions; it enables the district to identify and prepare for decisions to be made in the future; it helps us identify the potential opportunities and threats of developments in the community that once might have gone unnoticed until too late to plan for them; and it promotes a philosophy of action rather than reaction (p. 160). Kotler and Murphy (1981) found that strategic planning fosters an atmosphere of innovation as participants begin to understand the opportunities and threats facing the organization (p. 470).

McGinnis (1984) identified six factors in organizations that affect the ability to engage in strategic planning as intelligence, balance, analysis, innovation, proactivity, and risk-taking. He believed that the success of strategic planning depends on the integration of analysis and intuition, and effective integration depends on the effective management of intelligence, balance, analysis, innovation, proactivity and risk taking (p. 47). Cook (1989) emphasized the development of a strategic plan as being reciprocal in nature, from both the top down and the bottom up in an organization (p. 85). Sagor (1992) suggested strategic planning accentuates and reinforces educational "fondness for bandwagons and our tendency to focus on public relations rather than student performance" (p. 28). He believed "We would be well-advised to focus our limited attention on the moral obligation we hold as educators to create effective schools for all children and then do everything necessary to meet that obligation" (p. 28).

The Kansas Department of Education, one of the few educational ministries to undertake strategic planning, identified four improvements to the department's management system as a result of strategic planning:

> (1) Management and staff continuously strive for and demand a better information system for decision-making.
> (2) A link exists for organizing programs and staff to focus their efforts in the same direction.
> (3) An awareness has developed amongst staff members that their proven and successful job skills and behaviors of today may not be appropriate in the future.
> (4) The values of management staff are supportive of a new organization direction. (Carlson & Awkerman, p. 232)

For the purposes of higher education, Lang defined strategic planning as "a process of maintaining a continuous fit between a university's environment, its resources and its purposes as an institution" (in Holdaway & Meekison, 1990, p. 104). Hearn felt the literature about strategic planning in universities "is far from being a mature literature, it is rarely based on theory or empirical research" (in Holdaway & Meekison, p. 104). However, he noted that the writing identified five broad characteristics of strategic planning: a focus on broad goals, purposes, value, and mission; its medium term orientation; its focus on internal and external matters; its on going nature; and its blend of quantitative and qualitative approaches (p. 104). Holdaway and Meekison recommended that universities should carefully identify their foci, adopt appropriate procedures, involve senior administrators, emphasize the process more than product, use proper timing, consider environmental constraints, and acknowledge political realities of university life (p. 113). Jones (1990) identified four major reasons why strategic planning often fails in higher order institutions as (a) the role of chief planner is not assumed by the president, (b) the training for successful implementation of the plans is not provided to those involved in the planning process, (c) the trustees and other important stakeholders have not approved the process, (d) the timeline for achieving results is too long (p. 52).

Kaufman (1973) criticized practitioners and scholars for "perpetuating a myth of managerial omnipotence" in discussions on strategic planning (p. 307). He more recently stated "strategic planners must have the courage to imagine the world they want their children to live in, then find practical ways to achieve their vision" (1991, p. 6). Kaufman and Herman (1991) outlined a strategic planning model felt to be applicable to all educational operations and levels: the mega or community level, the macro or system level, and the micro or small group level (pp. 4-8). Sagor (1992), however, posited that

> If we are to truly mount an attack on illiteracy and under performance, it will necessarily require bold and controversial action. Yet if our favorite planning mechanism is destined to reinforce the values of compromise over aggressive action, we will never muster the wherewithal to sustain meaningful improvement. Strategies that reward vested interests cannot be expected to refocus a tradition-bound organization. (p. 28)

Although there is much in the literature about planning in general, there are certain writers whose views on planning are particularly relevant to the strategic planning. Carlson and Awkerman (1991) acknowledged that despite the significance of organizational planning, "the most prevalent approaches used in education have not lived up to expectations" (p. 23). After considering a number of viewpoints about planning, they concluded that "any planning approach which is not sensitive to multiple perspectives will not be able to obtain a grasp of the dynamics between various actors, and interest groups within the setting" (p. 30). According to Eide (1983), administrators pursuing educational planning have been forced to adapt and develop new strategies and that "the shift in strategic approaches . . . reflects the impact of organizational culture" (in Carlson & Awkerman, p. 56). These perspectives appeared to pave the way for consideration and adaptation of the corporate model of strategic planning in educational organizations. Brandt (1988) termed strategic planning a "a process to envision a future that may facilitate changes in student achievement and the organization of schools . . . a sub-unit of the public policy process, which could be an ideal technology for shaping the future of education" (in Carlson & Awkerman, p. 103). Brandt acknowledged that in this view, he was assuming that the bureaucracy pitfall in policy implementation could somehow be avoided (p. 103).

Benveniste (1989) believed that much of strategic planning "reflects a strong distrust of our ability to predict the future" and because so much cannot be predicted, "it is necessary to be able to move rapidly when particular events occur" (p. 78). He suggested that resistance to change would be strongest in organizations that have poorly understood or developed technologies, where people "have little information about potential consequences of marginal errors and serve clients with strong retaliatory powers" (p. 101). Benveniste pointed out that critical planning theory rejects the notion of an "apolitical political approach" to planning, highlighting Habermas' belief in the "importance of demystification in the search for political consensus" and his own view that "planners provide the communication channels that allow all participants in the planning process to express themselves without fear and with equal chances of being heard" (p. 75). He drew the comparison between comprehensive long-range planning, as a tendency toward a unitary plan with a specified set of objectives, and strategic planning which he felt was" far more concerned with opportunities and contingencies" (p. 80). Cook (1989) referred to those opportunities and contingencies as creating the future (p. 82). Friedmann (1987) pointed out that the future is invented both "from the top-down and bottom-up and effective planning takes its point of departure from the field, from experience" (p. 285).

There are some lessons to be learned from the adaptation and use of strategic planning in education. Mecca and Adams (1991) introduced Nanus' QUEST (Quick Environmental Scanning Technique) into an educational planning model that incorporates futures research techniques and divergent thinking methods into participatory group process (pp. 12-16). In a study conducted by North York Board of Education on school-based strategic planning; Erling et al. (1991) concluded that most staff responses to the process fell somewhere in the middle between totally positive and negative, and that overall, "there was a sense of cautious optimism and reserved judgement as all awaited feedback from supervisory officers about their plans and direction for the next step" (p. 11). This very statement raises questions on the role of leaders in planning for change and the centralization and decentralization of decision-making in education.

Leadership Within Change

Research on the act of leading in organizational change has evolved over a number of decades. Many of the earlier theories appeared to move from such stages as leader traits prior to the 1940s, to types of leader behavior in the 1940s, to the contingency model of leadership in the 1960s (Jago, 1982). The leader-match concept of contingency leadership espoused by Fiedler lead to second generation contingencies theories such as the path goal theory, the Vroom/Yetton decision making model in the 1970's, and onto a third generation that recognized attribution theory, reinforcement theory, and exchange theory (Jago, 1982). Hunt's (1984) multiple influence model took leadership another step forward to a "discretionary leadership concept" (p. 32). These third generation studies seemed to convey the image of the manager as an organizational leader (Immegart, 1988; Foster, 1986).

Studies which portrayed the political model of leadership paved the way to the concept of transformational leadership wherein both the role of the leader as an individual (Burns & Tucker) and the role of the leader in organizations (Bennis) were stressed (in Foster, p. 180). Leadership was seen as an interactive process, largely political in nature, dealing with exchange and distribution of resources and definition of goals (Bennis, 1984, p. 70). Several authors articulated the need to adopt a critical framework for the examination of the power concept in leadership (Foster, p. 182). Levin (1981) identified strong leadership as possibly the most important single condition contributing to effective implementation. He described leadership as "composed of two distinct, though overlapping elements: leaders and fixers" and referred to the behavior exhibited by leaders as more a function of individual characteristics and personality than of role. He felt that leaders "bring their own independent political resources to bear on the case at hand" (in Peters, 1986, p. 36).

Griffiths (1979) and Immegart (1988) presented the view that, perhaps, efforts thus far had focused on the wrong thing and that it was time to focus on the act of leading or on what leaders do (in Immegart, p. 274). Immegart suggested "the focus of the study of leadership ought to shift clearly to one on leading or the act of providing leadership" (p. 274). In his opinion, "students of leadership have tended to avoid studying actual unfolding situations" (p. 268).

Shared leadership and shared decision-making have come to the forefront more recently with reports such as *A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the 21st Century*, the 1986 report of the Carnegie Task Force on *Teaching as a Profession*, and *Tomorrow's Teachers* by the Homes Group (1986) which advocated giving teachers a greater voice in decisions that affect the school. Edgar Schein (1985) identified one of the challenges of shared leadership in his work, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, when he suggested the leader is likely to be the target of anger and criticism because, by definition, he or she must challenge some of the processes teachers have taken for granted (p. 323). Scharf and Fassel (1988), who identified the positive force of managing conflict in shared leadership and the challenges of "perfectionism of the addictive system," described the lack of open conflict and the unacceptability of mistakes as a sign of an unhealthy organization (pp. 65, 139).

Newmann, Rutter, and Smith (1989) in their study on organizational factors that affect school sense of efficacy, community and expectations in 353 public high schools, discovered that

> some organizational variables that are often assumed to be critical to effective schools have no substantive connection to school efficacy, community, and expectations. Neither the amount of time spent in staff development, the degree of leadership by the principals, nor the teachers' sense of influence in decision-making affects these aspects of climate. (p. 236)

In their summary of school effectiveness studies, Caldwell et al. 1988) presented the essential finding to be that highly effective schools have been given a high level of responsibility and authority to make decisions about staffing and allocation of resources, and that teachers have been empowered in a number of ways to make a contribution to planning and decision-making processes (p. 3). This approach implied (a) the school at the centre, (b) the capacity at the school level to have access to and draw from a wide range of approaches to teaching and learning, (c) administrators at the school level who have broad knowledge and skill in the areas of curriculum and learning, and (d) instructional leadership that emphasized the contemporary view of supervision as working with and through others, especially in collegial approaches (1988, p. 6). Elmore and McLaughin (1988) concluded after their survey of the literature of educational reform policies that "educational reform has historically had little effect on teaching and learning in the classrooms," that the "knowledge base of teacher empowerment will not come from formal research, it will come from the teachers themselves who respectfully request that we respectfully listen to them" (p. 62). They went on to say that "cooperation is the most highly recommended practical strategy for achieving empowerment and the benefits for effective schooling that come with it" (p. 63).

After considering a dozen reviews and approximately 60 studies of participation in decision-making, Conway (1984) concluded that the "acceptance of PDM (participative decision-making) had been built more on "faith and logic" than on the results of research. He believed there was a "distinct need" for more carefully controlled field studies documenting the effects of teacher participation and "there is an equal need for naturalistic and exploratory inquiry" (p. 34). He suggested that if Naisbitt's analysis of trends was at all accurate, "an ever-increasing demand" from the public for more direct involvement in decisions affecting their lives would be seen (p. 34). McGrath (1992) examined the literature on group participation in educational administration and summarized that "decision-making in public education is a pluralistic process that contributes to the politicization of educational administration" (p. 1).

Isherwood (1985) classified the types of groups involved in school governance as either "cooperative or counteractive" (in McGrath, p. 3). Cooperative groups such as parents, trustees, ministry officials, business, religious or other special interest groups, attempted to achieve a single purpose by "working cooperatively with the school"; and the opposite, the counteractive groups, each of which had its own mutually exclusive goals, engaged in political maneuvering and "manipulating others for their own ends" (in McGrath, p. 4). McGrath found that the issue for groups appeared to be that of "ensuring participation in the decision-making process" whereas for administrators, "the nature of the participation" appeared to be the main concern (p. 9).

Mitroff's (1983) assumptions about stakeholders are important at this point, as he believed "there is a network of interdependent relationships among all stakeholders" and although "no single stakeholder has a complete or totally separate existence of its own," he did acknowledge, within what he termed a presumption of rationality, that "stakeholders can be ranked hierarchically according to their importance and the confidence one has in determining their properties" (p. 43).

Educational Theory and Research

Guba and Lincoln (1982), in their review of the different paradigms of inquiry, suggested that the naturalistic paradigm had emerged only recently as a serious contender in social-behavioral inquiry as researchers concerned with "disciplined inquiry" had almost exclusively worked in the scientific or rationalistic paradigm (p. 235). "The naturalist does not search for data that fits his or her theory but develops a theory to explain the data . . . naturalistic approaches take full advantage of the human-as-instrument . . . " (p. 235). They argued that naturalistic inquiry "offers a contextual relevance and richness unmatched by any other paradigm. It displays a sensitivity to process virtually excluded in paradigms stressing control and experimentation" (p. 235). In their discussion of the axiom on the role of values in inquiry, Guba and Lincoln stated that the "problem, paradigm, method (s), and context must be congruent (value-resonant) with each other to produce meaningful findings" (p. 239). They presented four sets of criteria for trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiry: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability and suggested that the final research report include statements about what the inquirer did to satisfy the four sets of criteria, as well as reports from dependability and confirmability auditors concerning their verification of the inquirer's processes and conclusions (pp. 246-8).

Evers and Lakomski (1991) wrote that "many qualitative researchers . . . claim that the genuinely and distinctively human dimension of education and educational administration cannot be captured by statistical generalizations and causal laws" (p. 220). They also pointed out that quantitative researchers have often seen qualitative research as "lacking in objectivity, rigour, and scientific controls" (p. 220). Evers and Lakomski presented the critical theorists' view that, in addition to being unable to capture the relation between the human mind and social reality, the quantitative tradition did not capture "the essential role of values in that kind of knowledge we need to improve the human condition" (p. 222). With respect to the "praxis tradition" and action research, Evers and Lakomski (1991) stressed that "what counts as valid inquiry . . . is limited to what the surrounding epistomology counts as promoting human well-being" (p. 222). Miles and Huberman (1984), while they espoused support for the basic incommensurability of the research epistemologies, advised researchers to "be open to an ecumenical blend of epistemologies and procedures, and leave the grand debate to those who care most about it" and more importantly, to "develop working canons and procedures to judge the validity and usefulness of research in progress" (p. 20).

Johnson's views on perceptions are relevant to the validity and usefulness of research no matter which epistemological approaches are used (1987, p. 219). He argued that perceptions impose on educational inquiry in two critical ways: first, "researchers draw heavily on the perceptions of individuals associated with educational organizations to learn about life in those contexts;" and second, the impact of perceptions on researchers themselves whose own perceptions shape their theories about life in educational organizations, prompt them to identify certain activities and ideas to study, bias selections of methodologies, influence the data collected from educators and stakeholders, and the analyses of those data (p. 219). Despite the difficulties he identified, Johnson believed researchers could be better prepared to deal with "perceptual bias" by being conversant with the factors involved and by using the "strategies for enhancing and establishing the trustworthiness of perceptual data" (p. 221).

Carr and Kemmis (1984) held the view that the only legitimate task for any educational researcher to pursue is to develop theories of educational practice which are rooted in concrete educational experiences and situations of practitioners and "attempt to confront and resolve the educational problems to which these experiences and situations give rise" (p. 116). Corey argued that most educational research resulting from the scientific method was never intended to be used and that action research would likely result in changes in educational practice (in Oja & Smulyan, 1989, p. 5). Opinions have shifted from considering action research as the study of problems which grow out of the community to those arising from one's own knowledge (Oja & Smulyan, p. 3).

The concern with staff development and irrelevant educational research provided support for a resurgence of action research in the 1970s and 1980s (Oja & Smulyan, p. 9). Hord (1981) distinguished between cooperation and collaboration whereby cooperation occurs when participants reach some agreements but proceed individually toward self-defined goals, while in collaboration, participants work together on all phases of a project which provides mutual benefit (in Oja & Smulyan, p. 12). Researchers in the 1980's claimed that in collaboration, teachers and researchers set common goals and mutually planned the research design, collected and analyzed the data, and reported results (p. 12).

Foster (1986) pointed out that collaborative action research enabled the researcher to cross the paradigmatic boundaries and develop a framework that could be implemented "through the use of collaborators who work with school staff in developing a reflective and critical process of inquiry" (p. 166). Although some studies indicated that the outside researcher works against the empowerment processes of teachers' exploration of theory and practice, the majority of action research reports viewed the researcher as not only desirable "but almost one of its defining characteristics" (Oja & Smulyan, p. 162). Characteristics of the role included activating the process, bringing a variety of resources, providing a sounding board for practitioners, leading to a model of shared leadership (p. 163).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the literature believed to be relevant to the study was examined from four different perspectives: organizational change, restructuring, strategic planning, and leadership in change. The literature on educational theory and research, as it pertained to the methodology appropriate for studying and collecting data on "the human dimension of education and educational administration" was examined as well (Evers & Lakomski, p. 220).

A review of organizational change in the literature highlighted the concepts of rational, loosely-coupled and natural systems organizations, and the recognition that organizations are social entities that exhibit various dimensions. Different models for organizing resulted in different types of interaction and change. The three interrelated organizational cycles, technical, political and cultural, and their periods of uncertainty for the organization had relevance for the three organizations in the study.

Recent world restructuring trends have focused mainly on creating new conditions for teachers and increased performance for students. The reforms have taken the basic forms of intensification or second order structural changes characterized by a curious mix of centralized and decentralized planning, decision-making, and accountability measures.

Certain organizational factors and benefits have been identified in the successful adaptations of strategic planning to educational institutions and specific reasons cited for failure in others. Skepticism about compromise and the ability to create the future questioned efforts that were felt to be better directed toward student achievement.

The literature on leadership traced the manager as leader to transformational leadership and on to a preferred focus on the act of leading. The increasing trend toward teacher and community involvement in shared or participative decision-making has resulted in inconclusive results. The role of cooperative and counteractive groups in educational pluralism indicated the need for further research in this area. Perhaps Foster (1986) best summed up the point to which the literature on leadership and planning for change seems to have evolved when he emphasized "working with students, teachers, community, culture, and organization is basically praxis oriented toward sharing power, leadership, and effecting change" (p. 200).

The importance of knowledge about perception, the compromise of blended epistemologies for educational studies in order to onfront real educational problems, and the cooperative or collaborative methodology seem critical for qualitative research. The case study described in Chapter Four highlights the educational problem of attempting to plan for major change through strategic planning methodologies.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Philosophical Framework

The study did not fit neatly in one philosophical research paradigm or another. Instead, it included both rationalistic and interpretivist characteristics. If the structure of strategic planning had been studied only for its frequency of use, causal effect or generalizibility, a rationalistic approach might have been suitable. If the description of meaning that individuals gained from the planning experience had been the only purpose of the study, an interpretivist approach might have been appropriate. However, the structure of the planning process, the interpretations individuals derived from the planning process, and the organizational resources, all affect the quality of reflection and discourse and the significance of stakeholder participation. Therefore, the study focused on the effect stakeholder involvement had on the organization, the planning process, and the individuals involved.

A scientific-analytical approach to the study, although perhaps providing principles "to guard against bias, prejudice, and ideology by practitioners," would not have appreciated the significance of the "extensive theoretical powers that educational practitioners already possess nor recognized the importance of the process of inquiry to the professional development of practitioners" (Carr & Kemmis, p. 113). On the other hand, the interpretivist approach would have recognized that educational research must be rooted in the concepts and theories practitioners have experienced and would have emphasized the understanding of those theories and concepts. However, it might also would have presumed that such understanding would fulfill the purposes of the research. What seemed to be required was a functional combination of the scientific and interpretative philosophies, and a methodology that enabled the researcher to work collaboratively with the school, and cooperatively with district and provincial administrators, in order to analyze and contextualize, the use of strategic planning practices that were relatively new to schools and school districts in Alberta, and practically non-existent in government departments.

Assumptions

There were three assumptions imbedded in the philosophical framework of the study:

1. It is important that institutions responsible for public education in Alberta find better ways and means to meet the changing needs of students in the changing family and community context.
2. School-based restructuring required the critical reflection and discourse of the practitioners in collaboration with key stakeholders, if meaningful change in the delivery of public education is to occur.
3. A planning methodology, such as strategic planning, is necessary to provide a structure through which organizations could involve stakeholders in the collaborative identification and commitment to organizational changes required.

The Conceptual Framework

The case study methodology was used in this inquiry. Herriott and Gross (1979) referred to the usefulness of the case study in describing and analyzing "the complexities and realities of change efforts and the personal, social, and cultural factors that influence them" (p. 354). Borg and Gall (1983) stated that "the main justification for case studies is that they have the potential to generate rich subjective data that can aid in the development of theory" (p. 489). Guba and Lincoln (1981) referred to the usefulness of case studies in providing an experimental perspective (p. 375). They also identified considerations related to qualitative research, thus the case study methodology, that require attention in order to assure a sufficient level of trustworthiness for the study

(1981, p. 103). Bogdan and Biklen (1982) also used the term "qualitative research" to refer to several research strategies that share certain characteristics, one of which is the case study (p. 2).

Although a number of strengths can be identified in the case study approach, certain weaknesses have also been articulated. While Hofferbert (1974) cited an advantage of the case study as paying attention to the psychological dimensions of events being described, he also stated that the "necessary selection and filtering of data weaken the approach" (p. 139). MacDonald and Walker (1975) suggested that "case studies are always partial accounts, involving selection at every stage, from choosing cases for study to sampling events and circumstances, and to editing and presenting material" (p. 4). They identified the potential problem of the researcher becoming involved in the issues (p. 5). As a result, a collaborative-cooperative approach to data collection, and an acknowledgment and description of the researcher's role in the school and district strategic planning were built into the design in order to confront this methodological weakness.

The conceptual framework for the study (Figure 1) illustrates the nucleus of the study as the school strategic planning project: identifying the importance of the stages of strategic planning, the stakeholders involved, the organizational resources, and the product—the plan, in order to consider the significance of stakeholder participation. These same factors were considered, to a lesser degree, at the school district and provincial department levels, in order to establish the context in which the school strategic planning was occurring.

The methodology was a combination of collaboration and cooperation. The researcher worked collaboratively with the school principal in the developmental stages of the planning project and worked cooperatively with the school district superintendent and the deputy minister of education in order to provide data that might have future use. As the school component of the study progressed, additional people were involved in the

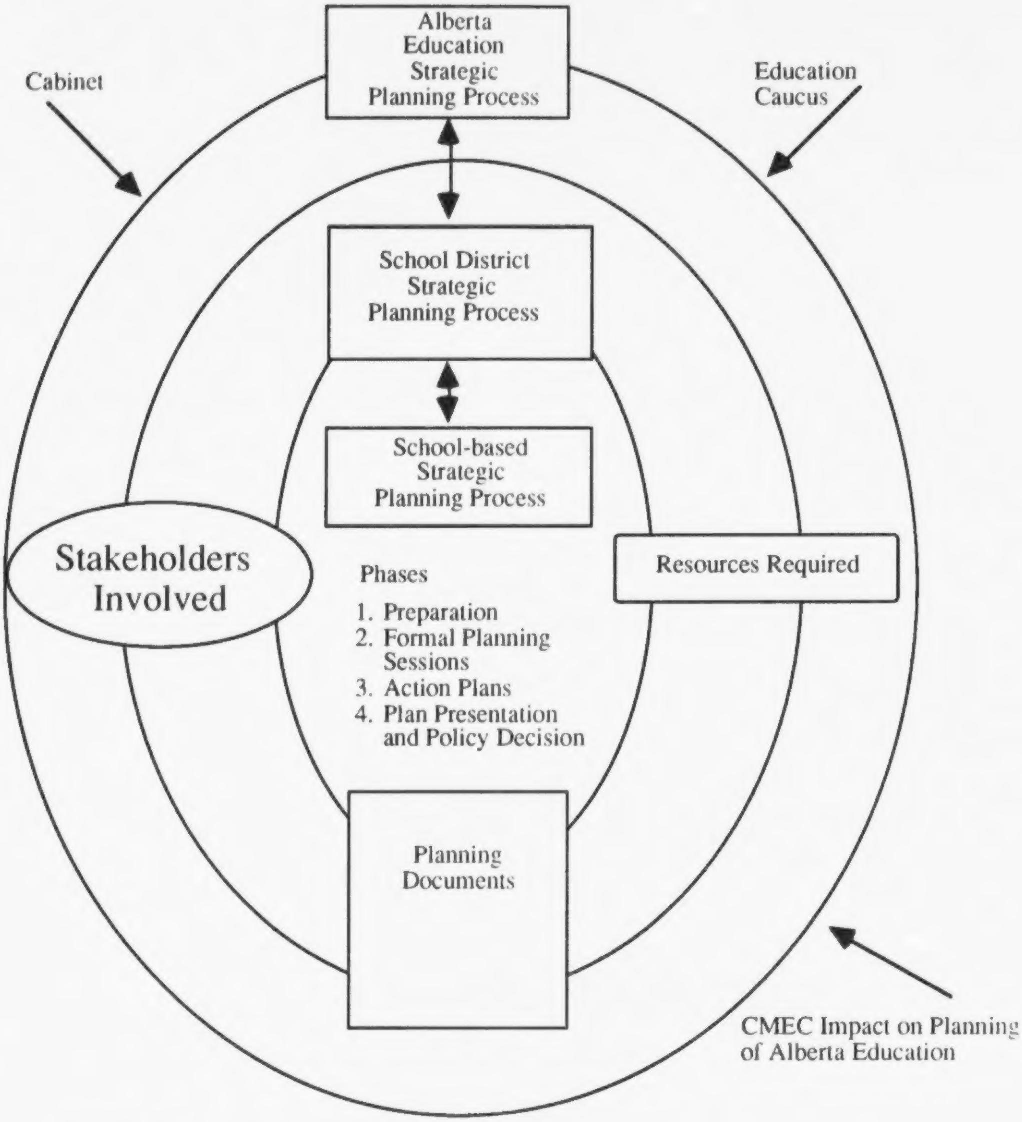
Alberta Education Strategic Planning Process
Cabinet
Education Caucus
School District Strategic Planning Process
School-based Strategic Planning Process
Stakeholders Involved
Phases
1. Preparation
2. Formal Planning Sessions
3. Action Plans
4. Plan Presentation and Policy Decision
Resources Required
Planning Documents
CMEC Impact on Planning of Alberta Education

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

inquiry process and collaborative research was enacted to some degree. The research proposal was presented to each of the key administrators in order that concerns or questions about the study might be addressed.

Data Collection

In the school component of the case study, the main "units of analysis" were the school staff and the stakeholder representatives involved in the planning project. Specific data collection techniques were used in the different stages of the planning project. Field notes were maintained during the planning sessions. Interviews with school administrators and members of the planning and action teams were audio-taped (see Appendix A). The planning team for the school consisted of approximately 20 members representative of six stakeholder groups; teachers, support staff, administrators, students, parents, and community partners. Each consenting representative was interviewed individually. Two school administrators uninvolved in the planning team were interviewed individually as well as the two facilitators of the project and two action team leaders. One planning session was video-taped. Copies of the planning documents developed to the conclusion of the study timeline were collected and a short school staff survey was used. A survey was administered to staff. A pilot study of the survey questions was conducted by administering the survey to three members of the staff who were not involved in completing the survey. Analysis of the data consisted of content analysis of audio tapes, the field notes, and the planning documents. The opinion survey was tabulated and the results analyzed using descriptive statistics techniques (see Appendix B). The results of the survey were incorporated into the text of the study as they pertained to the different research questions.

To obtain data on the school district strategic planning, six individuals who were representative of the stakeholder groups involved in the planning, were interviewed and audio-taped (see Appendix C). Observation of the district annual strategic planning review occurred and field notes were kept.

The data for the provincial component were collected through interviews conducted with six individuals who were representative of various divisions involved in planning for theprovincial department of education (see Appendix D). A document review was conducted as well and field notes were kept of the three executive meetings of Alberta Education Officials and one interdepartmental planning meeting observed. Content analysis was completed on the written recording of the interviews, the observation field notes, and the planning documents.

Verification

Given the collaborative nature of the study design at the school level, it was anticipated that questions that the school staff would like addressed in the study might arise from participants during the school planning process. Only one such question,was raised during the researcher's observation of the planning sessions and it was incorporated into the interview questions. The question was, Should there be Central Office representation in school-based planning? The interview data was clarified with each individual at the close of each interview. When questions of interpretation arose during data analysis of the interviews, two interviewees were contacted for clarification.

Common to both the strategic planning approach and collaborative-cooperative research is the process of recursion or cycling. Continual analysis of structure or design, procedures, and data lead to reconsideration or refocusing the work to meet the planning goals of the school and the requirements of the study better. Although the interviews were semi-structured, attempts were made, through additional questioning and probing, to obtain dependable perceptions and interpretations from each individual interviewed.

It was the responsibility of the researcher to bring forward to the principal relevant observations and suggestions resulting from observations of the school planning project. There were several occasions throughout the school's planning sessions when the facilitators sought the advice of the researcher with respect to the structure and discipline of the strategic planning methodology.

Ethical Considerations

The Superintendent of Schools for the school district was fully cognizant of the research project and received updates from time to time as the study progressed. As acknowledged in the limitations of the study, the school strategic planning project and the study of that project were initiated by the researcher in discussion with the school principal. The principal was kept informed and was involved in most aspects of the research project until such time as writing commenced. Although both the principal and the researcher were learners together in the project, it was recognized that the risks of reduced credibility and increased skepticism of staff were greater for the principal than the researcher. All participants in the school planning project were knowledgeable about the study, were kept fully informed if they were not directly involved, and were involved directly only upon voluntary consent. In the case of any concern, the participants were encouraged to contact the principal with their concerns. If the principal had any concerns about the nature of the study, he was to express those concerns to either the researcher or the superintendent.

Individuals from the school system and provincial department of education who consented to be interviewed were informed as to the purpose of the study, the conceptual framework of the study, and the use of the information gathered. They, too, were encouraged to express any concerns to the researcher, the Superintendent or Deputy Minister. Data were treated confidentially, and the identification of participants was safeguarded as much as possible in this document and will be so in any published work that might result from the dissertation.

During the course of the project, the principal appeared to become more comfortable with the planning methodology, which meant trusting the process, and with 'opening-up' the school to public scrutiny. The researcher became more proficient at non-judgemental observation. As the reflexive journal indicates, the struggle for the researcher was in allowing others, the principal and the planning facilitators, take the lead and the responsibility for the project.

Upon return to the district as a senior administrator, the researcher perceived the relationship with the school principal to be somewhat more constrained than it had been prior to the project. Although principals in the district reported directly to the superintendent, and other senior administrators were staff to the superintendent, the researcher sensed the principal felt more vulnerable than he had felt previously, as a result of the 'insider' view afforded to a member of the senior administrative staff during the planning activities of the school. The researcher also felt more vulnerable, conscious of having obtained confidential information and of the responsibility to separate the study from the day to day workings of the district. However, given the increased emphasis on site-based management and a reasonably well established support role for central administrative staff, the researcher did not find it difficult to meet that responsibility. After assuring the principal that the data collected were distinct from district business, the researcher virtually disappeared from the scene and the senior administrator focused contact with the principal on general planning directions of the school as they related to district initiatives and on other school and district issues in an attempt to reduce further any discomfort that persisted. Specific follow-up discussions that occurred with respect to the progress of the school's strategic planning occurred between the superintendent and the principal.

Later, when the conclusions and implications of the study were nearing completion, information felt to be helpful was shared with the new ly administrators of the school.

Trustworthiness of the Inquiry

There are four major traditional criteria for judging the trustworthiness of findings that emerge from inquiry: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. The terms normally used when applying these criteria to rationalistic inquiry are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Guba and Lincoln (1981) proposed four analogous terms to address the area of trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiry: credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity). As the inquiry utilized qualitative data, Guba and Lincoln's (1981) four terms, with recommended techniques, have been applied to the study to attain as high a level of trustworthiness as possible.

Credibility

In attempting to establish credibility of the inquiry, the crucial question becomes, "Do the data sources, most often humans, find the collaborative researcher's analysis, formulation, and interpretations to be credible?" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 246). Guba (1981) suggested that six techniques be addressed to ensure credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, peer debriefing, triangulation, member checks, and referential adequacy material.

1. *Prolonged engagement at a site.* The researcher's knowledge of the provincial education department, the district, and school and the challenges involved in planning was a major advantage to the credibility of the study.
2. *Persistent observation.* Observation of the school's formal planning sessions occurred on two occasions for a total period of two and a half days. One session of the district strategic planning update was observed. Three successive executive meetings of Alberta Education and one interdepartmental planning session were attended.
3. *Peer debriefing.* General observations were discussed with the principal, the superintendent, and the deputy minister. A university doctoral cohort group was also used to discuss insights, emerging methodological design issues, and to relieve anxieties and stresses that might otherwise have affected the inquiry.

4. *Triangulation.* As indicated in the design, several data sources were used in the case study to obtain different perspectives in order to cross-check data and interpretation.
5. *Member checks.* Interpretation was checked with individuals at the time of data collection.
6. *Referential adequacy material.* Video tapes, photographs, and documents, were collected but not used for analysis in order that an auditor might test interpretations from other analyzed data.

Transferability

A question often asked in qualitative research is whether there will there be sufficient thick description to make a reasoned judgement about the degree of transferability possible? Purposive sampling and thick description techniques were considered to address transferability.

1. *Purposive sampling.* The involvement of school administration, facilitators, staff and planning team, which included other stakeholders, broadened the data collected at the school level. The sample at both the district and provincial level was small in number, and even though the interviews were at least one hour in duration and the experience base of several of the respondents was extensive, the interview data was more limited than that of the school.
2. *Thick description.* Data was collected from various sources to provide sufficient "thick description" about both the "sending" and "receiving" contexts in order to make reasoned judgements about transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 247).

Dependability

The concept of dependability relates to the stability of the inquiry after "discounting such conscious and unpredictable (but rational and logical) changes" (p. 247). The dependability aspect of trustworthiness of the study was addressed through the use of a stable design, stepwise replication, and a dependability audit.

1. *Use of a stable design.* Although provision was made for flexibility, the design of the study was stabilized by the use of one school, one school system, and one department of education and a similar format for data collection.
2. *Stepwise replication.* By using the school staff who were not part of the planning team, as well as the planning team itself, the concept of two roughly equal halves had some relevance at the school level (p. 248).
3. *Dependability audit.* A colleague attended the school planning meeting in which the Action team leaders presented their action plans for acceptance or rejection by the Planning Team.

Confirmability

With respect to the confirmability of the study, the onus was not on the objectivity of the inquirer but on the confirmability of the data. The aspects of triangulation and practice reflexivity were used.

1. *Triangulation.* This technique has been described under credibility.
2. *Practicing reflexivity.* A reflexive journal was used to attempt to uncover assumptions, biases and prejudices of the researcher during the inquiry (Figure 2).

The four trustworthiness criteria and the specific techniques presented by Guba and Lincoln proved to be reasonably effective. The credibility techniques of (a) prolonged engagement at a site, (b) the persistent observation, and (c) triangulation, were more fully utilized, and thus more successful, than the peer debriefing, members checks, and referential adequacy material.

With respect to transferability, the purposiveness of the sampling and the thick description at the school level were more than sufficient to make reasoned judgements about the degree of transferability to other high schools in the district and to others within

January 20, 1992.	
Message from (principal) in response to my request for his perspective on our working relationship in this project. His comments and my responses clarified where we stand although I'm not sure he understands the collaborative research approach I am working with.	I'm experiencing a bit of tug-a-war feeling wanting (principal) to understand how I want this to work vis a vis his perspective. I am backing off and letting it flow with his current level of meaning.
January 21, 1992.	
Got the action plan back from the facilitators today. Must get it and copies of articles to (principal) this evening. Just realized we missed a couple of valuable stakeholders in the school's planning process so sent (principal) a message suggesting that they be included. This was an opportunity missed to really begin inter-agency collaboration. Hope it's not too late to address and include.	Feeling pressure to get the stuff copied and to (principal). I want the team to have more information and ideas than what I know is practical. Must just let (principal) decide from information I send him and the facilitators. Feel some trepidation in giving the proposal to (auditor) to read.
January 24, 1992.	
I want to capture my thoughts and feelings about the meeting with (principal) and facilitators yesterday at the school. We reviewed the package of materials which looks quite useful for the planning team. (principal) is very much in charge now and perhaps somewhat nervous about the prospect ahead. Meetings and arrangements scheduled and made. We had some discussion about student achievement results and whether that would focus the team too much on specific issues. We decided specific information should be available if further detail was requested by members of the team. We talked briefly about collaborative action research and I gave (facilitators) some information from Oja and Smulyan that I must clarify so they understand the flexibility of the research project.	This is really a useful activity/training for me to work on. It changes my authority position techniques. I feel myself wanting to take charge and I am forcing myself to just offer gentle suggestion from time to time that may or may not be taken. Trying to concentrate more on phrasing questions rather than making statements. I don't feel they understand the research model and that my observations can be of value to them.

Figure 2. Reflexive Journal

the province of similar size and organization. Similarly, the sampling and description at the district level, complemented by the researcher's general knowledge of planning in school systems across the province made reasoned judgements about transferability possible. The researcher felt the sampling and sufficient thick description at the provincial level was insufficient to make reasoned judgements about transferability.

The use of a stable design, which emphasized similar data collection techniques, and the audit proved to be reliable dependability techniques. The dependability auditor provided a written statement of his observations (Figure 3). At the school level, the results of the school survey served to substantiate the dependability of the interview data.

The confirmability techniques of triangulation and proactive reflexivity were found to be of practical use. The confirmability audit, as designed, was difficult to achieve in that a colleague was able to verify that the findings could be traced back through analysis to the original data but to determine that the interpretations were reasonable and meaningful required detailed study of the data and findings and too great a time commitment.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data commenced with the school interview data as it was the most substantive; thereby perceived to be the most challenging to analyze and organize into

School-based Strategic Planning
Observation of a Doctoral Colleague

Introduction

In order to assist in enhancing the trustworthiness of the study, Ms. Gee asked me to observe one meeting of the school planning team. The meeting observed occurred on the morning of May 15, 1992 in the district office building. The purpose of the meeting was for the Planning Team to hear and review the action plans developed by the three action planning teams.

Role of the Observer

Ms. Gee was an observer throughout the meeting. Both she and I sat at the back of the meeting room, as this provided a vantage point from which we could see all the participants. During this time, I observed the planning team, Ms. Gee, and the interaction between her and the planning team.

Ms. Gee kept detailed notes. Her notebook was divided into two parts: a) the larger part was used to record her observations of the events which transpired, and b) on the right hand side of the page, she created a column in which she recorded her personal thoughts, feelings, and emotions related to these events. This method assisted her in ensuring the observations were, in fact, observations and not interpretations. The meeting was also videotaped to provide another source of data.

There was a limited amount of exchange between Ms. Gee and the members of the group. The exchanges which did occur were mainly related to interpersonal comments and not to the substance of the meeting. I do not believe that Ms. Gee influenced the meeting through her observation.

Observations and Interpretations From the Meeting

The following observations were made during the morning:

1) The sessions started on time and the breaks were restricted to the time allocated.
2) All members of the planning team participated in the various discussions which occurred.
3) The facilitators exhibited considerable control over the group. the 'rules' for the objectives of the various discussions and types of questions which were asked were reviewed prior to the first presentation. Teachers who became judgemental in their questions were asked to stop that kind of questioning.
4) The mood of the planning team appeared to be congenial and pleasant throughout the meeting.
5) The group was responsive to the presenters and appeared to be focused on the task to be completed.

Impressions:

1) The language used by some presenters, in particular the first, suggested that the group she represented did not fully accept the idea of a partnership between teachers and parents, students, and business. 'We' and 'they' were used as exclusive terms. It was interesting to note that the president of the parents' group commented on this and attempted to use 'we' to include members of all three groups.
2) The first presenter also used terms which some of the students and parents seemed to find offensive. Two examples were: a) the 'borderliners' and b) the 'plodders' who became the salt of the earth.
3) The quality of the presentations was high and the questions asked by the group suggested a genuine interest in the plans the presenters put forth.
4) The hierarchical nature of schools was emphasized through comments made by both the teachers and the administration.
5) The action plans focused mainly on changing some of the structures of the school. For example, the third group presented action plans which were centered on changing aspects of the information systems of the school, while the first presenter concentrated on systems for the early identification of at risk students.
6) The planning team accepted its responsibility for reviewing the action plans very seriously. Two plans were rejected and additional plans modified.
7) All members of the planning team appeared to have been accepted as equals. Students and parents seemed to feel comfortable in speaking both in the small groups and large group settings. Two of the reporters were students.

Concluding Comment:

The activities of the morning suggested that all members of the planning team were committed to the strategic planning process. They appeared to be quite willing to give of their time and energy to ensure the planning team was effective. The three teachers who presented the reports from the planning team were enthusiastic about the plans their teams had developed and their involvement in the process. The process itself, as much as the substance of the plans has the potential to change the organizational structure and culture of the school.

Figure 3. Dependability Audit Report

meaningful presentation. A frequency matrix method was used to categorize and organize the data. A spreadsheet, based on the 19 interview questions, was created for each type of respondent—student, administrator, teacher, parent, and community representative. The researcher then listened to each taped interview, noting the responses to each question on the spreadsheet, and indicating whether the responses were exact quotations or were the key points made by the each respondent for each question. Wherever the researcher perceived the response might be used to illustrate the key points being made, the exact quotation was recorded.

Through a cut and paste method, the interview data were grouped so that all the responses to each question, from one particular group of individuals, were on the same spreadsheet. For example, for the question on "the need for change in how the high school programs are provided to students in this school and district," the administrators' responses were grouped together on page one, the teachers' on page two, the parents' on page three, etc. It was perceived that at some point in the analysis process, it might be necessary to categorize the responses of particular groups of respondents. However, as the themes and sub-themes emerged to provide the structure for organizing the data, the categories of respondents became immaterial.

The responses were colour-coded according to the key focus or theme being expressed in each response to each question. To carry on the previous example, all responses to the question on "the need for change" that related to "leadership" were coded yellow. Then another frequency matrix, using the questions and the key foci or themes from the responses, was developed to track how many times each theme idea emerged. The number of references to a specific theme was used to determine which themes became the organizers for the data. The themes least referenced were rolled into more general theme areas. The initial list consisted of nine general themes.

1. Leadership—62 references
2. Strategic planning process—44 references
3. Stakeholder involvement—40 references
4. Personal or emotional reaction—35 references
5. Communication—29 references
6. Aspects of change—31 references
7. Specific changes required—18 references
8. Planning for education—14 references
9. Researcher effect—21 references

Next, the responses related to each theme were reviewed. Sub-themes or factors within each response were noted. Those referenced most frequently became the sub-themes within that particular theme. Sub-themes that had few references were consolidated into broader sub-theme topics points so they would not be lost if the data were coalesced with other data later in the analysis process. The information from each respondent was entered into the computer by the themes and sub-themes and a code for each respondent attached. The responses in each theme were read, reread, and shifted, as necessary, to the most relevant themes. Specific sub-themes began to merge into more general ones. For example, (a) teacher preparation time, (b) role of the school, and (c) student programming, came together as key points under the sub-theme, "role of the school" in the "leadership" theme.

Concurrently, the major themes began to merge, reducing the initial nine themes to seven. At this point, the themes of "personal reaction," "communication," and "strategic planning process" became sub-themes of (a) personal reaction and (b) communication within the major theme of Strategic Planning. This step changed the order of frequency and importance of the major themes and the seven major themes became the following:

1. Strategic planning

2. Leadership
3. Stakeholder involvement
4. Change process
5. Specific changes required
6. Planning for education
7. Researcher effect

The material in each theme was read once again (a) to ensure that it fit appropriately into the themes and (b) to identify the key points to be mentioned within the sub-themes. Further consolidation occurred and the seven themes merged into five themes. The theme "specific changes required" became a sub-theme within the theme, "the Change Process" and "the researcher effect" became a sub-theme within "the Strategic Planning" theme. Once the material was organized into the five themes, a detailed analysis for meaning beyond the most literal response proceeded in each theme. Related thoughts and ideas of the researcher were noted also as information to be included in the text at the appropriate time.

At various times throughout the second rereading process, the researcher returned to reread aspects of the literature. When this occurred during analysis of the "Change Process" theme, for example, the focus of the theme began to change. The sub-themes within "the change process" theme such as time needed, role of school, difficult process, constraints, etc. that had seemed to focus on characteristics of the change process, seemed to be indicating how individuals attempted to cope with change. When the way individuals coped with change became the focus, many coping behaviours were identified by the respondents. These were categorized as follows:

1. The recognition that change is difficult
2. The need for help and time
3. The need for support
4. The need to understand why
5. The skepticism and cynicism
6. The creation of recognition for change
7. The importance of concrete evidence of change
8. The acceptance that change is necessary
9. The need to understand how students would be affected
10. The need to understand the implications for teachers
11. The need to identify structures to deal with the changing needs of students and teachers.

It is possible that the rereading of literature on a particular theme topic such as the change process influenced how the researcher interpreted the responses. The views expressed by individuals became indications of how they were attempting to understand the changes that were occurring rather than simply making an observation about what was happening. Although this change of focus appeared to be a subtle one at the time, the researcher believed it was an important one in grasping the real messages being communicated.

At this point, it became important for the researcher to do more than just capture the comments relevant to the sub-themes on change; it was important to begin writing the text. However, in the first attempt to write about how the group responded to the questions about change, the responses to the questions on Strategic Planning seemed to merge with the data on change. For example, when the data about the difficulties of change were studied, the personal reactions to the strategic planning process became relevant as did the information from the school staff questionnaire. It became necessary, then, to chart the frequency of the responses related to each sub-theme in the change process. Hence, a master frequency matrix spreadsheet for each theme was developed and used for each significant sub-theme in the presentation of the data. The frequency matrices for each sub-theme quantified the comments and helped the researcher see more clearly how to proceed. This was another small breakthrough in the analysis process being developed. By using the frequency matrices to quantify the qualitative data, giving it relative value, the perceptions of individuals and the groups relative to a particular key point could be presented. Specific quotes that exemplified the key point being made were identified to be used later in the text to make the information more meaningful and interesting.

The interview data at the district and provincial levels were analyzed separately from the school data and from each other. As it was more limited, with six respondents at each level as opposed to twenty at the school level, the data were more easily quantified.

Given the similarity of the interview format and questions, the district data fell quite naturally into the same major theme and sub-theme areas as that of the school. But when the researcher began to write text for a theme, such as "planning for education," using the school and district level data, it became critical to know whether or not the provincial level data would merge into the theme areas established. So the analysis of the provincial level interview data began. The provincial data were challenging to organize into themes due to the distinctive nature of each response. The data were analyzed and organized into as many of the established theme and sub-theme areas as relevant.

The analysis, organization and consolidation of all three levels of interview data proved to be extremely challenging. A third review of the school data organized into the five themes and key factors or sub-themes resulted in combining the "change process" and the "planning for education" themes into a new theme called "Change in Education." Incorporation of the data from Alberta Education resulted in the reshaping of four theme areas:

1. Change in Education
2. Leadership
3. Strategic Planning Process
4. Involvement of Stakeholders

At various times during the consolidation process, the researcher went back to the literature, particularly that of Tichy (1985) on organizational change cycles and Gluck et al. (1991) on strategic management. The appropriate structure for consolidating the three levels of data had not yet emerged completely. Continued analysis of the three levels of data within the four themes resulted in a complete shift to two new and more general theme areas, "The Nature of the Organization" and "Planning for Change in the Organization." Three major sub-themes or factors emerged within each theme:

1. The Nature of the Organization
    (a) The External Environment
    (b) The Role of the Organization
    (c) The Internal Climate

2. Planning for Change in the Organization
    (a) Beliefs About Planning
    (b) Attitudes About Stakeholder Involvement
    (c) The Planning Methodology

This theme organization became the structure for the presentation of data. An outline for the interview data from three organizations, based on the major themes, sub-themes, and key points identified by the respondents, was developed to guide the written text for the case study (see Appendix E). Additional data from the school staff questionnaire, the observation notes, and the document reviews, were included within the appropriate themes and sub-themes as the text was developed.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the philosophical and conceptual frameworks for the study were described. The strengths and weaknesses of the case study methodology were discussed and the data collection, ethical considerations and verification techniques reviewed. Criteria for judging the trustworthiness of the qualitative research findings were presented and the usefulness of techniques applied to the study were discussed. The development and evolution of the data analysis process, and the establishment of the theme structure for the presentation of data in Chapter Four, were described as well.

CHAPTER IV

THE CASE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, the case study is developed in three component parts. One educational organization was selected to represent each of the three levels of planning responsibility for education in Alberta; the provincial department of education, the local school district, and the school. The provincial department of government, with its responsibility for Early Childhood Services through Grade Twelve education in Alberta, was selected to provide the provincial context for the educational planning occurring at the district and school levels. The school jurisdiction was selected on the basis of the strategic planning underway to provide the context at the local level. The extension of the district Strategic Planning into a large school made that school and its planning initiative a major focus of the study.

The data for the school component of the case study were the most extensive and structured while the data for the provincial component were less extensive and structured. Hence, the school component is presented in much greater detail than either that of he school district or the department of education.

Alberta Education

Background

In Canada, the responsibility for education was given to the provinces in the Constitution Act of 1867. Any national coordinating role in education was performed by the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, established in 1967. The role of the Council was to facilitate the individual or collective actions of provincial ministers. School boards were established by the Province of Alberta through the Minister of Education and they operated with "a great degree of autonomy within broad parameters established by the province" (Zatko, p. 1).

The provincial government department responsible for education in Alberta was called Alberta Education. The provincial school system served approximately half a million students from Early Childhood Services to Grade Twelve. There were 145 school jurisdictions operating approximately 1,562 public schools. There were approximately 110 funded private schools, 179 private ECS operators, 102 "other kinds of schools" (Zatko, p. 1). The province provided between 50 to 60 percent of the funds expended by school systems and the remainder was obtained by the jurisdictions through local taxation. An accurate count of the home-based schools in the province was not available although the generally accepted information indicated approximately one percent of the provincial student population was being home educated at the time of this study.

At the time of data collection, Alberta Education had been organized into four divisions: Planning and Information Services, Student Programs and Evaluation, Regional Services, and Financial Services. These divisions were managed by four Assistant Deputy Ministers who reported directly to the Deputy Minister. Additionally, there were two support branches: Human Resource Services and Communications, managed by directors who also reported directly to the Deputy Minister. At the time of writing (1992), the organization was consolidated into three divisions: Planning, Information, and Financial Services; Student Programs and Evaluation; and Regional Services, with the Communication and Human Resources branches still serving distinct functions. The total number of staff had been reduced to 770 full-time equivalents.

According to the planners in Alberta Education, a major educational reform effort in Alberta started in the early 1980's. ". . . before 1982, there was a tradition of achieving consensus between Alberta Education and stakeholders before provincial decisions were made and implemented" (Zatko, p. 27). The arrival of a new Deputy Minister of Education, and changes in the political, economic, and social climate in Alberta appeared to have initiated the reform movement.

Much of the reform was based on the belief that a results-based approach to education "must be fostered, and that it should permeate all levels in the educational system" (Zatko, p. 2). There was felt to be too much emphasis placed on the "inputs" and "processes" of educating students and not enough on the product, the achievement. "Alberta Education's approach initially was to define the vision, the goal and desired results and try to convince department staff and stakeholders that this was the right thing to do and in the best interests of students" (Zatko, p. 27). Alberta Education's stated goal was "to establish desirable conditions that would assist school jurisdictions in providing the best possible education to all Alberta students" (Zatko, p. 2). To accomplish this goal, a series of initiatives were implemented "to modify the relationship between the department and the educational community" (Zatko, p. 2).

> The tactic adopted was to place almost sole emphasis initially on the move towards results. A general direction instead of a detailed plan was established for moving toward a more results-based approach thus enabling the department to remain flexible in responding to opportunities as they arose. (Zatko, p. 9)

The Deputy Minister and five staff members of Alberta Education agreed to participate in the research study to determine the significance of stakeholder involvement in planning for change and new directions in education in Alberta. The researcher also attended three management meetings within the organization. The journal notes and observations, relative to planning activities and stakeholder involvement that resulted from those meetings, were used in addition to the perceptual data from the interviews of the six participants. Department planning documents were reviewed also.

The interviews of the six Alberta Education respondents included three broad questions about planning for education. These were: 1) Generally, how do you feel about the kind of planning for change that is done for education in Alberta? 2) What aspects of federal or provincial planning do you see directly affecting the planning that is done? and 3) What do you believe to be the ideal role for Alberta Education? The data were organized and presented in the two themes, the Nature of the Organization and Planning for Change in the Organization.

The Nature of the Organization

Three factors emerged that were used to describe aspects of the nature of the organization. These were: a) the environment external to the organization, b) the leadership role Alberta Education should fulfill in education in the province, and c) the internal climate of the organization.

The External Environment

Four respondents identified aspects of the provincial government operation as significant to the environment external to Alberta Education. The external environment was perceived by one respondent to be one where "The provincial government separates economic and social policy." By another, it was where "The provincial government affects the dollar figure for education, and usually identifies government priorities but not in the last couple of years." For a third, it was a government that was showing some interest in long-range planning, "The legislature has discussed multi-year planning." A fourth respondent perceived that "The national prosperity initiatives are having an impact—we are involved in a Human Resource Development Plan which is a five year project."

The Role of Alberta Education

The major role of Alberta Education was perceived by two respondents to be of a political nature: (a) influencing government planning and (b) creating a place for education on the political agenda. As one respondent stated, "I'm looking at the organizational development stage. We're trying to impact on government planning. Support for an open information system is needed. I support what Alberta Education is doing, linking finances to policy direction." A second emphasized,

> We must get a deliberate place on the political agenda. It is the only way to get government support for education. With a declining percent of people involved in education, we must keep the attention of the public. It is really

> difficult to plan. We need to make use of opportunities. We have to demonstrate improvement to get the budget for education. There is much uncertainty. The priorities are problems that become serious.

A third respondent identified the role of Alberta Education as forcing change and forging a new set of values with respect to education,

> There are many views out there. We can only forge a new set of values—what is going to be, by pushing beyond consensus—moving from what is to what should be to what is going to be. The role is to create a value shift from what is to beyond what should be to policy of what is going to be—within the political zone of tolerance.

Holding the vision and creating an environment for change through positive involvement was emphasized by a fourth respondent, "Alberta Education should be front-end holders of the*Vision* There should be proactive involvement, should create an environment for change. I have a personal passion for removing rules and fight constantly to keep those principles (of MFP—Management Finance Plan)." A fifth participant defined the role as establishing expectations and policy and being accountable, "The *Vision* is setting priorities. We should set expectations on behalf of the public, and be accountable for the results." Another agreed,

> Alberta Education should set direction, definitely and clearly; policy equals results. We should set an example in the cross-communication process, be a model and supporter of innovation and creativity. We should ensure open information systems, empower stakeholders to fulfill their responsibility.

The Internal Climate

The six respondents also referred to aspects of the climate within Alberta Education that affected the nature of the organization. One perceived that "What's important happens at Education Officials (senior managers)." Another was of the opinion that "The purpose of the organization is not clear; it is our role to set expectations and standards, collect information, and demonstrate accountability that the job is being done." The internal management style was perceived by one to be that of "matrix management but if it is not managed properly, it is chaotic." For a fourth participant, the style was "forcing cross-divisional teamwork—an individual in one division solving a problem with another individual in another division through task teams." One respondent identified the leadership role in the results-based approach to be "a real shift ; results-based is hard work as it is uncharted territory."

Planning for Change in the Organization

Two broad questions about planning in Alberta Education were used to encourage study participants to share their views on the planning methodology used by the organization. The questions were a) What planning processes do you feel would be effective at the department level? and b) How does the planning of your division integrate with the rest of the planning process? The respondents were also asked two questions about stakeholder involvement; (1) How do you feel about stakeholder involvement in the planning process—students, parents, community members, central office, trustees? and (2) What are your views on proactive as opposed to reactive involvement of stakeholders in the planning process?

Three additional questions asked respondents to focus on specific aspects of the planning methodology used in Alberta Education: (1) How effective do you feel the planning process is in encouraging you and other participants to share concerns, contribute ideas, knowledge and expertise?, (2) Do you think the planning process gets participants involved in examining and discussing the real issues of education today? and (3) What are your thoughts about the annual planning session held by the department? Is there a sense of working together toward common, shared goals?

Three factors of planning for change in the organization emerged from the responses to the seven questions as well as any additional comments that were offered. These were identified as (a) beliefs about planning in the organization, (b) attitudes toward stakeholder involvement in planning in the organization and (c) the methodology used for planning in the organization.

Beliefs About Planning

Four of the six respondents linked the concept of planning within the organization to the style of the leader. The Deputy Minister at that time identified definite goals upon assuming his position,

> I had three broad goals when I started: to change the philosophical orientation of education from a focus on learning process to results-based education; to change the substance, the curriculum, and the resource flow, MFP (Management Finance Plan), to support a results-based focus; to change measurement and evaluation to focus on outcomes, student achievement.

One respondent perceived, "The Deputy Minister's perspective is definite." Another stated, "The direction comes from the Deputy Minister to Education Officials to Directors and committees."

The question about the planning methods used in the organization brought forth the perception that planning had to take advantage of political opportunity,

> It tends to be reactive. You have to hit when the opportunity is there. There is not much opportunity for consensus. The attempts by Education Officials to do front-end planning results in fire-fighting when budget priorities are decided. Long-range planning is working in the capital plan. There is no mechanism to manage change at the department level.

One respondent described the planning in the organization as "extra-rational rather than rational. It doesn't roll up in any way. It's a problem solving model." Another stated, "The Planning Division tries to provide leadership but the organization resists. It is used to intervene, set directions, not for planning." A third commented, "The planner must be an extremely competent technician, the keeper of the vision and needs transferred authority to be confident, assured."

A review of the documents provided by the Planning Division of Alberta Education presented valuable data in the form of the written version of the planning for change in education that had occurred within the organization. Two documents that provided significant information were *Directions to 1990, Alberta Education's Four Year Plan, 1987-1990* and *The Alberta Strategy For Educational Reform: Balancing Inputs, Processes and Results.*

In December, 1987, the document entitled, *Directions to 1990*, was forwarded to school board chairmen, superintendents of schools, private school and ECS operators, as well as to internal directors, presidents of the ASBA, ATA, CASS, ASBOA, and the deans of the facilities of education in the province. This document outlined

> the directions and specific priorities which Alberta Education proposes for the next four years. This Plan enhances the ability of the Department to continue to provide strong leadership to Alberta's educational system by maintaining essential programs and services, and by implementing initiatives to make substantial improvements in education to 1990 for the benefit of Alberta students. (Alberta Education, 1987, p. 1)

It was introduced to its recipients in this way.

> This is the first year that Alberta Education has prepared a formal strategic plan. It represents part of the department's efforts to implement the management of education cycle underlying the Management and Finance Plan. The management cycle is comprised of six elements: strategic planning, policy and program development, operational planning and budgeting, implementing, monitoring, evaluating and auditing, and communicating. Through our collective efforts in implementing this management approach, students will benefit from our increased capability to focus on priority areas in an effective and efficient manner. (Alberta Education, p. 1)

Basically, this document, *Directions to 1990*, presented the core values developed by the Department to guide its operations, the trends and associated implications for education from 1987 to 1990, a description of what education in 1990 might look like, criteria for establishing Department priorities, and the priorized initiatives for Alberta Education for the four years. The information presented on the goals for education in Alberta related to the interview data pertaining to the goals of the Deputy Minister and the role of the department to create a value shift. "It is impossible to predict the future with any degree of certainty. However, it is important to try and describe where education could and should be" (Alberta Education, p. 17). Similarly, the information reinforced the views that planning within the organization had to take advantage of the political opportunities.

> This description takes into account the many opportunities for education arising from significant societal trends and associated implications, government policy, economic constraints, and departmental initiatives. This approach permits Alberta Education to design a plan that will assist the Department in seizing opportunities to shape the future of education, and in monitoring its progress to achieve that future. (Alberta Education, p. 17)

The document, *The Alberta Strategy for Reform*, written by Zatko (1990) outlined the planning initiatives that had occurred in education in Alberta since 1982.

> This paper describes the results-based component of the educational reform initiative in Alberta. . . . outlines the general framework for reform in the province. Projects directed at enhancing the results-based components are described, with the focus on the interrelationships among these projects. . . . observations on the status of implementation of reform in Alberta are presented. (Zatko, p. 1)

Zatko's observations on the status of implementation were relevant to the interview data on the external environment, the internal climate and stakeholder involvement in planning for change in education.

> At the outset of the reform started in 1982, Alberta Education aggressively pursued change from the top. Even though there was a tremendous amount of discussion and consultation with stakeholders, the department made it clear that the Minister of Education would establish the agenda for reform and make the final decisions. Subsequently, the "new style and rhetoric" of the Minister, Deputy Minister, and other key Alberta Education senior staff resulted in stakeholders' viewing the process as top-down. (Zatko, p. 21)

Zatko illustrated that the pattern of initiating reform had gradually shifted from a top-down approach in 1982 "toward a more collaborative approach with stakeholders in 1990" (p. 21). He listed the phases of this change as (a) top-down initiatives from Alberta Education, (b) mixed top-down initiatives from Alberta Education and collaboration between Alberta Education and stakeholders, (c) collaborative projects, and (d) stakeholder-initiated reform projects, perhaps supported by Alberta Education in their initial stages" (Zatko, p. 21).

Information in the two documents referenced earlier, *Directions to 1990*, and *The Alberta Strategy for Educational Reform*, supported the perspective that the leader, upon entering the organization, had definite goals in mind for the direction of education in Alberta and that commencing in 1982, a major shift occurred in the "new style and rhetoric" that indicated the "Minister of Education would establish the agenda for reform and make the final decisions." (Zatko, p. 9). Initiatives such as the Provincial

Achievement Tests, Provincial Diploma Examinations, school jurisdiction evaluation policies and practices, reflected the results-based focus of the leaders (Zatko, p. 22).

In September 1991, Alberta Education presented a plan entitled *Vision for the Nineties, a Plan of Action.* Since that time, an annual report called "Achieving the Vision" was developed by Alberta Education and distributed throughout the educational community in order to communicate to the public the progress made in achieving the Vision.

Attitudes About Stakeholder Involvement

Two questions on the involvement of stakeholder groups were asked in order to elicit specific views from the respondents on this topic. One response to the question about proactive stakeholder involvement indicated a variety of modes of involvement may be necessary.

> Collaboration has a negative connotation from war times. I use reaction, consultation sometimes, confrontation sometimes. I believe the time and rapidity of change is too great to use the consultative model except in selective situations. We involved stakeholders in the Secondary Education Policy developments—proactively and reactively. The School Act is the first legislation to actively involve stakeholders proactively. The Management Finance Plan was only reactive involvement. For the drop-out or second count, there was not consultation, proactive or reactive, knowing the direction would be unfavourable.

Another respondent commented on the demands and the need for flexibility, "A lot of things are happening that will not change—the response to external demands. Change happens incrementally, not proactively. Flexibility is necessary. You can't change much now. Two decades ago we had a high involvement process, consensus building." A second identified the rapidity of change and the lack of support of major stakeholder groups but acknowledged potential for focus groups,

> People are never satisfied with the process or the outcome. That has affected the planning process. The environment is changing quickly. The Minister set out to put education front and centre. We didn't plan for the Chamber study or the Human Resources Report. The Deputy Minister and Deans (of Education) are frustrated by the inability to make change. The Alberta School Boards Association is becoming less useful. The ATA is predictably negative. The Minister must have caucus and cabinet support. We used more focus groups

> over the last year. Individuals in the groups gain a better understanding—smaller groups, quicker action. Each minister starts wanting positive relations with stakeholders but gets frustrated with the delays. With consultation, you must consider the usefulness—who, when, how. It doesn't result in decisions or help in implementation. Time like there was for the Secondary Education Review is no longer feasible. The partners are so much broader now.

Two other respondents perceived that roles could be identified for input from groups that have ownership in education. As one said, "The organization must decide where the responsibilities for decisions lie. The Planning Division could develop a joint role for Alberta Education and CASS (College of School Superintendents). Those affected by a plan must have ownership." The other believed "The language, communication of planning is a problem. The organization is at the point where we could use strategic planning using directors, assistant directors, external jurisdictions."

Another respondent identified how internal stakeholders had been used in the past. "The directors and associate directors were involved in the *Vision*. It is very short-term oriented. I don't know whether the *Vision* is a vision or a tactical function." A second stated that "When the Deputy Minister changed, the involvement model changed. There is highly politicized power in the Deputy Minister."

As there seemed to be a general feeling amongst respondents that the important planning decisions occurred at the level of the Education Officials, data from the observations of the weekly senior management meetings of the Education Officials were used to corroborate or in contrast to the views of the six respondents. Three meetings over a period of three weeks were attended and significant agenda items, discussions, and actions were noted. Decisions judged by the researcher to constitute planning for change were categorized on a time matrix as requiring long-range (three to five years), medium-range (one to three years), or immediate-range (up to one year) planning. The leadership role for each action was identified as was the type of involvement, either proactive or reactive, of external and internal stakeholders. Figure 4 depicts the time matrix and illustrates the judgements made about planning decisions.

Long-range Planning Items	Leadership Role	Stakeholder Involvement
1. Request to business for further involvement in senior executive study	Planning Division	Proactive consultation with business executives on high school content
2. Prosperity initiatives meetings	Deputy Minister	Consultation with other government departments
3. 1996-2000 task force to draft Capital plan	Finance Division	Internal
4. ATA Pension Meeting	Planning Division	ATA
Medium-range Planning		
1. Planning framework to focus organizations priorities for 1993-94 budget development	Planning Division	Internal- cross- divisional task teams
2. Metis Settlement Grant	Finance Division	External consultation
3. Special Education funding for Private Schools	Finance and Communication Divisions	None
4. Communication of double count to the field	Finance Division	Initial reactive with trustee associations
5. Meetings with University Education administration departments of U. of C. and U. of A.	Deputy Minister	Internal- Communication Branch
6. 1992 Vision Results Report Card	Planning Division	Internal- task team
Immediate Planning (up to one year)		
1. Request for science teacher to attend International Conference	Program & Evaluation Division	Proactive consultation
2. Teacher strike recommendation to Minister	Regional Services	Proactive external request for stakeholder information

3. Development of Francophone transportation guidelines for the Minister	Deputy Minister	Proactive external consultation
4. Development of contextual paper on resident students	Planning Division	Internal-Regional Services input
5. Presentation to CASS/A.Ed. Conference	Deputy Minister	Internal task team
6. Pupil Count verification	Finance	None
7. Conference Society of Alberta convention attendance	Deputy Minister	None
8. Process for consultation with superintendents	Deputy Minister	None

Figure 4. Alberta Education Officials Meetings

In the three actions considered to be long-range planning, the action discussed involved external stakeholders in some way. Two of these situations included proactive consultation whereas one was reactive consultation. One of the actions involved internal stakeholders in collaborative developmental work.

In the six actions deemed to be medium-range planning, five involved external stakeholders in education: two of those required consultation and a proactive request for input, two involved reactive consultation, and one constituted collaborative development work. One action involved only internal teams in collaborative development work.

There appeared to be eight decisions related to immediate or short-range planning. Five of these were identified as involving educational stakeholders in the activities; one of which solicited a response from the field, two solicited input from internal divisions, and two consisted of internal collaborative work.

The Planning Methodology

When participants in the study were asked about planning that occurred within the organization, several identified the Vision document. One indicated,

> There is no single planning process or planned planning process. We can set goals and priorities but we have no idea if things will go that way. There is a formal planning process with budget. We try to link both. Detailed planning by budget function occurs. The plan drives the budget development, then the budget decisions drive the plan. The branch does extensive plans linked to the VISION. These are approved by the Deputy Minister. Task teams set budget priorities which go to the divisions as the focus for budget.

Another stated,

> It is not a collaborative process, not an orderly approach. The process is more reactionary now. I'm alarmed at the reactionary planning, the actions of Alberta Education. The annual planning sessions are not important. What is important happens at Education Officials. The Planning division puts the issues on the table. We have two full days of planning within the branch. Then we formalize for the following year. We hold a planning session to organize, focus on results as well as monitoring. The VISION is setting the standards, priorities. The change in the plan of the Minister from the four year plan to the VISION caught people by surprise. Now the VISION is out, it will set the agenda and our division will correlate activities with it.

One respondent identified three other features of the planning methodology; it was improving, organizationally some strategic planning processes were being attempted each year, and the model for divisional planning was in place,

> We're getting better. We've had three plans in ten years—by design. The second plan, a bottom-up process, didn't use political opportunity. The organization likes the VISION because it is operational, tactical. We vary the approach at the planning session each year. Divisional planning parallels the planning system in the organization. The annual session has value.

Another stated, "The Divisional Management Council holds annual planning sessions. We look at priorities like the *Vision,* the *Report Card.* Each branch within the division is to set criteria as a group for the year's priorities." A third indicated that

> We put our efforts into language, communication of planning. There is very little in the long term—although everything is long term if done tactically. Our annual plan is developed whereby the units cost and rank priorities. The Divisional Council ranks based on the goals and criteria of the division each June.

The importance of communication of planning initiatives was also identified by a third respondent, "There is a communication plan set out for each initiative, also communication strategies for each initiative from the other divisions. There was a deliberate plan to set the *Vision* and the *Report Card*."

Two participants perceived that the division delegated the responsibility for planning "brings priorities forward; it's a reactive process" and that "The planning sessions attempt to focus on mission, values. Maybe some communication, good feeling is accomplished."

Summary

This component of the case study provided background information on Alberta Education and the data collected from the six Alberta Education officials who participated in the study, the meeting observations, and the document review. The data was presented in two themes, the Nature of the Organization and Planning for Change in the Organization. The nature of the organization was described through three factors: the environment external to Alberta Education, the role of Alberta Education, and the internal climate of Alberta Education. Perceptions of the beliefs about planning for change, the attitudes about stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology were used to describe planning for change in the organization.

The School District

Background

The school jurisdiction was comprised of a mix of urban and rural communities. It served approximately 13 thousand students in 28 schools, four of which were high schools, and employed about 700 teaching staff. It was governed by a large school board supported by a senior administrative team of five members. The Superintendent and associates headed up five departments which provided services to the schools, the Board of Education, and the educational community. There were additional support staff in each of the five departments. Every two years for the past six years, the system had conducted an extensive survey of its community in order to monitor support for delivery of schooling in the district. Feedback was provided to the Board, each school, and each support department.

In 1989, the Board of Education of the school district undertook a major strategic planning initiative designed to provide direction to the system for the next five years and beyond. The challenge was to (a) produce a clear statement of the corporate mission, beliefs, and values of the school system, (b) analyze the internal and external environments to determine the critical issues facing the district over the next five years, (c) establish goals for the organization in relation to the critical issues and strategies and plans to achieve the goals, (d) develop commitment by the Board, administration, staff and other key stakeholders to the directions, and (e) initiate an annual strategic planning process to review and update the plan. The planning initiative involved in excess of 200 members of the educational and local community; elected officials, business and industry representatives, parents, staff, administration, and Alberta Education representatives.

Six individuals agreed to participate in the study, four of whom had been involved in the Strategic Planning. Each of the stakeholder groups invited to be a part of the original planning team was represented. The information from the interviews merged, as it did for Alberta Education, into two themes, the Nature of the Organization and Planning for Change in the Organization.

The Nature of the Organization

The interviews of the six study participants from the district were guided by three general questions about the district:

1. Generally, how do you feel about the planning for education that is presently occurring in Alberta?
2. What do you believe should be the role of the school board in planning for education at the system level?

3. What do you believe should be the role of the school board in planning for education at the school level?

Three factors emerged from the data that served to describe the nature of the organization. These included: (a) the environment external to the school district, (b) the role of the district, and (c) the internal climate in the district.

The External Environment

The respondents identified three elements within the external environment that affected the school district. These were: Alberta Education, the societal expectations, and community awareness of the challenges faced.

Two respondents expressed frustration and disillusionment with the lack of leadership by Alberta Education and the actions of the Minister of Education. The parent stated, "I'm not very happy with the *Vision* statement. It's supposed to be a plan. I don't see it as a good plan, there was no input into the Plan. There is frustration expressed at the Board level, by teachers on integration." A school administrator observed,

> An output model is being followed, not how to do it. What's happening provincially is very difficult to follow. The minister is coming in with a VISION that is not reflected in policy. On the other hand, there is some direction to follow. There are conflicting messages. Some things are falling into place now. If the Minister has made one major mistake, it's his vision statement. It's a political statement. When we're talking about empowerment and collaboration, no one person can say he has a vision. He lost credibility.

Similarly, a trustee indicated irritation with the *Vision* but felt,

> There is a recognition that longer term information would be helpful. Funding must follow the commitment to plan. No connection between planning and budget. I don't see a lot of planning in curriculum. There certainly isn't a feeling of help from the province. Politically we're are at odds with our Minister. His vision confuses the issue. It's not an action plan. It's a philosophical statement. The Plan of Action irritated me and the board because it isn't one. I'm getting sick of those statements.

A teacher and a district administrator commented on the many rapid changes occurring and the need for appropriate planning structures to be in place to deal with them. The teacher perceived, "There were so many changes taking place all at once. We have a planned process so everyone is moving in the same direction. Goals are set." The administrator suggested,

> There's a lot greater awareness than there has ever been. We are entering into difficult times of restricted budgets, and we need to plan better use of restricted resources, to be more accountable to the public. More systems and schools getting into the planning process than ever. A lot are looking at Strategic Planning. I have had a lot of requests for our Strategic Plan from out of province.

The participant from Industry observed that, within the community and the province, there was some understanding of the challenges and shortcomings of the educational system,

> It's partly because of hard times. The competition has passed us—they're doing things differently. We haven't been educating our young people as well as other countries. People have become much more aware that North America is not keeping up—business, society, government operation. Opinions have been changing. I've been involved at high school, junior high, and university levels; advisory to university, NAIT, SAIT; Energy, Mines and Resources. As an employer, I'm aware of some of the shortcomings. I have empathy as I know what a good job the vast majority of teachers are doing with fewer resources, exploding information, equal opportunity. It's impossible to teach every kid everything.

The Role of the School District

The six respondents identified three major functions of the school district; setting directions and policies, managing the financial resources, and community accountability. The role for the parent participant, was one of setting the mission, direction, goals, "The system-wide things—the mission statement, seeing students as a whole person, should be done by the Board." The trustee focused on the role of establishing the policy of the organization, "The district decides the extent to what something is done. The Board sets standards, then decentralizes. The Board enables—it all has to start from the top."

The representative from business believed the role of the Board was to be custodians of the dollars and managers of the business,

> The school board are custodians of the tax dollars required by education, to see that schools are properly maintained, aspects of business must be attended to. In terms of curriculum, school administrators and teachers are far better equipped to judge about content. I would have difficulty if there was a lot of meddling in that area by trustees. They are delivering the most important

> product of the country. You can't have a whole lot of ways of delivering curriculum in one province. There has to be some professional input to delivery so we have standards. The Board comes in at the level to allocate resources upon need.

For the school administrator, the role was to be accountable to the public and to allow the schools to do their work without political interference,

> I don't think the Board have a role at the school level. I find Board members use SAC's (School Advisory Councils) as a political forum—they have a point they want to get across and are coming to enlighten the parents. We're (the school system) doing it the right way in terms of sending out a whole lot of ideas and asking what people are going to do with them.

For the teacher, accountability required the Board to be knowledgeable and aware of changes,

> Things are happening so quickly we are wondering how to get prepared for the changes. What the Department of Education and the school district are doing with Common Instructional Concepts is falling into place. The board have to be involved to a certain extent as they are accountable to the public. They need to be knowledgeable and aware.

The Internal Climate

Three characteristics of the internal climate of the district were identified by the respondents. The district was thought to be progressive, a place where there was a belief in people, and where there was cautious support for school-based decision-making.

The trustee thought, "We're really well ahead of other boards. I'm getting so I don't think we should have to do that so much," and he felt there was political concern about longer-range planning and communication with the public,

> It became obvious that we had to get back to longer term planning. There was also quite a cry for public input. Our Communication Committee has grown by leaps and bounds, the Board is interested in communication. Boards not generally involved as much as this district.. There are some general plans around.

The system administrator reflected a general belief in the strengths of people in the organization, "The Plan is a reflection of my style of leadership. If you get the right people together, you will get good things happening. I was comfortable with it right from the beginning. I think it's a wonderful exercise, people talk about education."

Two others, the school administrator and the trustee, expressed support within certain limitations, for the autonomy of schools. The trustee saw "the school as being quite powerful. There's a lot of room for them to do a lot of things. One school may do a lot more than others. I don't think I'm comfortable with differences I see developing. I see we need to move more to central standards." The school administrator commented, "The Superintendent has said here are some ideas, do something with them. We were more centralized trying to be more decentralized. The resources have to go with that direction. It's a good way to go as long as someone is defining the outcomes, the results."

Planning for Change In the Organization

The participants were also asked four questions about planning and the involvement of stakeholders in the planning processes:

1. The Board of Education has had a strategic planning process in place for approximately two years now. Why do you think that process was initiated?
2. How do you feel about the strategic planning project?
3. How do you feel about stakeholder involvement in the planning process, the representation on the Planning Team and/or the Action Teams? Are there stakeholders that should have been involved that were not?
4. What do you believe is or will be the effect of involving stakeholders in the process?

Additionally, eight specific questions were asked about the planning methodology:

1. What was your reaction to the last planning update?
2. Have there been aspects of the strategic planning that you found challenging?
3. What do you think are the strengths of the strategic planning project? The shortcomings?
4. How effective do you feel the strategic planning session was in enabling you and the other participants to share concerns, contribute ideas, knowledge and expertise?

5. Do you think the strategic planning process resulted in examining and discussing the real issue of schools today? The critical issues for you?
6. How do you feel about the quality and the use of the document?
7. In what ways have you personally used the plan, Toward 2000?
8. What effect do you think the plan, Toward 2000, is having on the school system, on the community at large? In your perception, how is it working?

The responses to these twelve questions merged into the theme called Planning For Change in the Organization. The respondents' perceptions were categorized according to the same three aspects of the planning identified in the Alberta Education component of the case study: the beliefs about planning, the attitudes about stakeholder involvement and the perceptions about the methodology of planning in the organization.

Beliefs About Planning

The beliefs about planning for change seemed to address two unasked questions; what is planning and who should be responsible for it? What is planning for change? A system administrator identified planning for change as creating an appropriate environment for input,

> The Board was very desirous of forming a plan of priorities, a plan for the future. We were getting overwhelmed with priorities from all directions. The new board saw the need but got thrust into a plan they hadn't been involved in. Ideally the board has a very important role to play—it has to be one of trust. The most successful plans will be ones that aren't dictated from the top down. They have a role to play in setting the environment. I can't see one working when someone comes in and works with the board and that is passed on down. They have to have the final say but the role is one of setting the environment.

The school administrator outlined a definition for planning by describing the work still to be done to bring the planning processes within the system together, and the Board's role in planning,

> We should come to one planning process overall—come to objectives, then budget. It has to be put together. Staff development has to be apart of it as well. The School Board has to deal with the broadest possible ideas. In this district, they are far too involved in the day to day activity. There are far too many committees. Cut the meeting time and the Board in half and do a better

> job. Let educators get on with the job. People who want to be politicians want to be too involved.

A teacher respondent shared how the Plan was already being used to direct the on-going planning and activity of their particular stakeholder group and so also defined planning, "The question we ask is whether the activity now has to do with the Strategic Plan or is it an add-on. People were involved on a volunteer basis. If potential was seen, someone would suggest a person. We had speakers informing us on what was happening."

The responsibility for planning was felt to rest with the Board. The trustee recalled, "Eleven years ago this Board had three and five year plans but then didn't have any money so plans start to go by the wayside. They were administrative plans. We have a responsibility to look at the provincial planning, programs and incorporate that." The system administrator believed the responsibility for implementation was that of the Superintendent, "A lot of Board members felt it was a runaway freight but I wasn't afraid of that. I would hope that whoever the Board chose (as superintendent) would implement it; that the Board would use that as a criteria for replacement. I don't think my leaving would cause it to collapse."

In essence, the respondents said planning for change at the system level was creating an environment for input, having one process where objectives drive the budget, having a tool to manage the on-going activities, and that the responsibility for planning was that of the Board of Education and the responsibility for implementation was that of the Superintendent.

Attitudes About Stakeholder Involvement

Five respondents indicated support for the involvement of people outside of the school system in planning for change, but for varying reasons. The trustee suggested there was little effect except for the political credibility that comes with the opportunity for public input but that industry might have some ideas to contribute.

> The effect is probably very little. Any member who has an ear to the public, they pretty much know what's going on. I am not always as interested in input as I am about the opportunity being there. Politicians want to be able to say—you had an opportunity. There's probably not that much value. It's just the opportunity that counts, the legitimacy. In some specific things, they might have some ideas. The educators are the ones who know. The trustees know all the other stuff, they can represent those views. The educators and trustees could probably do it. Industry might make the difference. They may really have some things to share. They are an important stakeholder because they focus on outcome.

The parent respondent expressed support for the school system as a direct result of involvement in the Strategic Planning and felt that outside perspectives were valuable to the system,

> The real reason is that you're interested in their opinions. People outside the system have different perspectives and can only enrich the plan. There was no lack of respect for my views. The biggest thing is the buy-in into the Plan. I'm very in favour of it. I speak very positively about the County schools and it is from my involvement in the strategic planning process. I don't see any negatives. It is really a valuable tool. I think it would be hard to bring new people up to speed. I'm not sure it would be that useful if they were just jumping in now.

The respondent from Industry felt the benefit of stakeholder involvement was two-fold: the stakeholder's increased awareness of problems faced by the system, and the school system's awareness of public expectations,

> I think its absolutely essential. One of the most important parts of TQM (Total Quality Management). Whatever work you are doing, you have to have customers and suppliers. You have to know what customers want. We've got to do more talking. I know that until recent times, there was not adequate communication with industry. The Young Scientist conference would have been very difficult to do five years ago. The sense that communication is necessary is there.

The system administrator felt there was opportunity for more stakeholder involvement as a result of the planning methodology, which would increase the level of community confidence in the school system,

> We could insert some people during annual reviews. We would now ask for School Advisory Council representation and about students. There are two things—the pay off in the plan itself, a broader spectrum of involvement. And better level of confidence in the community for the system—the community saying that these people are doing good work.

Four respondents specifically related stakeholder involvement to the communication function. The parent participant, expressing dissatisfaction with school level opportunity for involvement in planning where communication should occur with parents, drew a relationship to the system planning process,

> I'm extremely unhappy with the planning at the school level. No input from parents in where the school budget dollars are going. Communication of where the dollars are spent does not include the parents. Is that accountability? Parents are not consulted in setting the objectives. The parents' group is shut out. A process at the school level would be valuable. I'm not sure it should be the same as the system Strategic Planning. It would have to be scaled down; the same model specifically wouldn't work. They wouldn't do a mission statement, but activities could be planned.

Although positive about the overall effect of stakeholder involvement, the school administrator expressed concern that communication of the changes to the Plan would become increasingly important as the people involved changed over time, "I think the effect will be good for a while. That will wear out over time. People change. It's the same with any planning process. If the representatives change as the plan is updated, I think you have to run it by the people who are tied to that issue."

Another respondent drew attention to the communication benefit of knowing what the stakeholders want from the educational system,

> There is a two-way benefit. Stakeholders become aware of the problems of schools. Schools become aware of the expectations of the stakeholders. Teachers seem to be astonished at our identification of students' lack of ability to express themselves in written form—writing reports. Some of our best people spend most of their time rewriting other people's reports. There is tremendous opportunity for a shared role. We have been working on a project (with a school). There are limits in terms of money. We've got to shed some paradigms, do some more things innovatively. Industry awareness is there now.

Together, the attitudes of the six respondents about stakeholder involvement were positive. They indicated a planning methodology enabled increased involvement, provided an opportunity for input and there was value to having outside perspectives; it improved communication and stakeholder awareness of problems in the system and system awareness of stakeholder expectations resulted.

The Planning Methodology

Eight questions guided the gathering of specific information about the planning methodology, the Cambridge model of Strategic Planning,used within the system. The questions were designed to (a) discover how individuals felt to have been personally involved in some aspect of the planning project, (b) identify the strengths, weaknesses, challenges they had observed during the process, and (c) discover what they felt to be the omissions, the effects, the results and uses of the plan, Toward 2000.

1. *Personal Reactions*: The personal reactions to the planning methodology were varied. The system administrator said,

> I found it very exciting. I didn't feel I was losing control of anything. I really felt we were able to tap into the minds of a lot of good people collectively. The buy-in and participation was terrifically exciting. There might have been some things in there that wouldn't have been my priorities. When you get people and put them together, you will get a product that is very useful. It's a matter of trust. I never felt there were things I couldn't live with.

Parental interest was in the process and knowing the people involved, "I loved it. I found the process interesting—it had a few problems. I was involved in municipal planning and it was really disappointing. I also liked knowing the people at Central Office in case I have problems." There was pragmatic support from the Industry representative,

> It's a bit of a corporate culture thing. Gurus tell you about different process, "flavour of the week" thing. What works is what fits the corporate culture and you do it. People become disillusioned after awhile. A planning process is definitely necessary—what your objectives are, you use the one that fits your culture.

The school administrator was skeptical,

> Having a major plan is essential but it took a lot of time that could have been directed at student learning. It was contrived to a large extent. It brought in a lot of ideas that I didn't think would stay and they did. But the economy doesn't allow us to do anything about them. This disillusioned me about the process. It is a very important process but it must be constrained to reality or disillusionment sets in more amongst administrators. At the time, it seemed redundant to what we were already doing. It took on too wide a spectrum of details and got us going on committees that really didn't have any relevancy to school level; e.g. sound language policies. It was a way of organizing tasks that had to be done but there were a lot of red herrings that don't need to be done; for example, global concepts.

2. *Challenging Aspects of Strategic Planning*: Four participants commented on aspects of Strategic Planning that they found to be challenging. From the business perspective, the challenge in Strategic Planning was to be able to react to the fast pace of the world,

> To be successful in industry, we have to manage quite differently than we have in the past. The world is a very fast, very dynamic place. You have to react to the pressure and realities of a dynamic world. Things are going to change and you have to be prepared to go with the flow.

For the parent respondent, understanding the application of some of the ideas in the Plan to the classroom and the successful communication of its progress to the public at large were the challenges,

> I have a hard time seeing how some of the Plan gets translated into the classroom. I have to rely on people's beliefs that it can happen. The update was good. I had some difficulty with dollars. The biggest thing was information on where we were at, the progress. Not enough people understand. It's pretty innovative. I'm not sure what you do about it.

The district administrator also viewed communication as a challenge, but from the perspective of interest and commitment of school staff,

> With the district plan, the biggest challenge is to communicate to the schools, to internalize those directions. The real challenge is to get them turned on. The quarterly reviews have been involving principals. I'm not sure the information is getting to the staff. The principals need to incorporate the plans into their school objectives.

Communication of the Plan, the use of it to develop the annual budget, and the continued involvement of new people in the process, were elements viewed as challenges by the trustee participant in the study, "I'd like to see if we can make it a living plan. We need to source new people. We can use it to drive our budget."

The school administrator identified aspects of the Action Plan development as challenging, "Following the format, there was a set formula for generating steps. A lot of us were beyond that process. I would short circuit it. It seemed like a long process and the rating on cost-efficient was virtually impossible to do."

3. *Strengths of the Planning Project:* A number of different strengths were identified by study participants, either within the responses to other guiding questions or as a result of a specific question guiding the individuals to consider the strengths of the planning project. The parent respondent felt the variety of stakeholders involved, the equity afforded each during the planning sessions, and the neutrality of the facilitators were important strengths, "Everyone had an equal voice. The variety of people from outside the system, the variety from Central Office. I'm very happy with the environment and information processing sections. The facilitators running it did not have a stake in it." From the district administrator's perspective, "The participation is the real strength—people can feel ownership. The level of awareness is much greater, it legitimizes the process a lot more. The timeliness were much more realistic than if it had been done by the Board."

For the school-level administrator, the real strength of the project was the attempt at creating a global plan, a vision of the system in the future, and the identification of activities necessary to get there,

> Trying to get the big picture of where the system is going and what are the activities occurring. Ideally everything would be tied to it, no redundancies and still project into the future. I see more references to it as we go along. We are asked to have some token thing in our objectives. Teachers are not concerned with it at all.

The respondent representing the teaching staff felt the strength of the project was its usefulness as a vehicle for stakeholder involvement,

> There has been a lot of criticism in the media. People have removed themselves from education for so long, now they are becoming involved again. Educators should still have control but industry is looking at how they can help. The strategic plan gives a vehicle for them to help us.

4. *Shortcomings of the Strategic Planning Project:* In the interviews, participants were encouraged to identify specific weaknesses or shortcomings of the district planning project. The responses highlighted aspects of the entire project to date and the planning process that they considered to be problematic.

Time was a major concern for a number of respondents for different reasons. The timing of implementation of the planning project and the intervening election of new trustees were serious drawbacks to the project in the view of the district administrator, "The overlapping elections—I would work harder at updating the board in how the plan was developed. Advising the community—I don't think we were very effective that way." The time devoted to the project was considered a shortcoming by the school administrator, "The time spent on it. It didn't supplant other planning processes. It seemed more in addition to our other planning processes, an add-on. I don't know if it can ever tie everything together." The use of time during the planning sessions was also one concern of the parent respondent, as well as the technical aspects of differentiating between objectives and strategies, and the completeness of the critical issues component of the process,

> We spent a lot of time on parameters and it was not that valuable. I had a heck of a time differentiating between objectives and strategies. I felt there were a couple of issues that didn't get addressed. It concerned me there was nothing in the plan to address kids arriving at school fed and healthy. Its no good having great plans if kids are hungry. We talked about language, some projections and then we slid French Immersion into that issue. It didn't belong as part of the Action Plan and didn't fit into the parameters. We needed much more time on strategies.

The interface with priorities from Alberta Education and communication were the major weaknesses from the perspective of the classroom teacher,

> My concern would be if we are working together with what is coming down from Alberta Education. We need to relay the information to all teachers, communicate the new concepts. With staff development, and schools looking after their own, there needs to be inservicing to teachers on how the plans will proceed.

5. *Representation of Stakeholders in the Planning Project*: If the views of respondents on the actual stakeholder representation in the planning process did not emerge during the course of the interviews, study participants were asked to focus specifically on the topic through two questions: (1) How do you feel about the

representation on the Planning Team and the Action Teams? and (2) Are there stakeholders that should have been involved that were not?

The teacher respondent was the most positive, "All the people were involved. It was excellent so we have buy-in. Teachers working on committees are very knowledgeable and will inservice, help others. There were a lot of meetings. It was very worthwhile but quite intense at the beginning." Although generally pleased with the representation, the system administrator felt more parents, more representatives from industry, and more students would have strengthened the Planning team,

> I was pleased with it generally. I would like to have had a couple more parents. Also was not pleased with lack of representation from industry. I should have been more pushy about that for wider involvement. I think we had a good cross section. I was very pleased an Alberta Education representative joined our group. We never thought of students and that would have been very appropriate. We did get some involved in the Action Teams.

From the parent's point of view, the representation from Industry and lack of on-going attendance of two other Planning Team members weakened the overall representation, "There were very few representatives from outside the system. I'm not sure that's a problem. It was unfortunate we lost our parent and Chamber representatives. Also there was no one from Industry. We're reasonably industrialized and Industry could have provided insights."

Public criticism about the lack of public representation and the perceived over abundance of staff involved was a concern to the trustee respondent,

> It would have been better to have people with different perspectives—the worst guy in the bunch and get them on side. I feel we did everything we could to get them. I received a lot of calls about too many staff involved. "You didn't have enough of the public." We advertised and couldn't get them. The same thing happened with The Tomorrow. We're not getting the people we should have. I said, "What can we do to make sure this plan is accepted, important?" We could increase the involvement not in committees but being brought in at a very specific level. It's the specific areas that become updated—like Coping Skills. Can we identify now some new stakeholders we might get something really valuable, Fort Saskatchewan Regional Industrial Association—people more outcome oriented?

The school administrator felt positive about the representation except for the lack of student input, "We covered all the bases pretty well. People were of good faith and interested in being involved. I think there could be a place for student involvement. There should be a way of gauging student perspective in parts of the plan."

6. *Opportunity to Contribute*: Three of the respondents indicated they felt the planning session was effective in enabling them to put forward their concerns and ideas, and to contribute their knowledge and expertise to the development of the Plan. For the school administrator, the opportunity for individual contribution afforded the opportunity to get to know some different people, "There certainly was the opportunity. I met some people I wouldn't have met otherwise and that was valuable." The ability to contribute was effective also, for the parent representative, because of the people, "It was effective. I saw how well it worked. Part of it was personalities; the people in authority didn't squash ideas, this contributed to the effectiveness of it."

The teacher representative identified the difficulty of dealing with many different views but felt the stakeholder groups had the opportunity to put their views forward.

> The most difficult part was that there were so many ideas. Everyone wanted a part in there. I expected the representatives to represent the views of teachers and students so they can become life-long learners, and how much more can we do as teachers and administrators. Yes, the partners felt that they had the opportunity to contribute.

The system administrator noted the importance of having sufficient confident "outside" people involved so the educational jargon did not minimize participation in the sessions, "The outside people may have been overwhelmed by the jargon and educators but we had some very confident people. You want to make sure the community representatives are carefully chosen and there are enough so they don't feel intimidated."

7. *Critical Issues*: When asked whether the strategic planning sessions resulted in the real issues of schooling today being examined and discussed, the teacher, district administrator, and trustee respondents presented favourable perceptions. The teacher stated, "Yes. On the environment—students had buy-in, they became more aware. We

could have been doing it in the classroom but the school emphasis resulted from the plan coming in." An administrator said,

> I'm not sure the critical issues were a lot different than what staff and Board would have identified. The product probably wouldn't have been different. I think they were very appropriate and the plans were right on. I think so. We limited ourselves to six and that was a wise move.

The trustee agreed, "Yes, we got to critical issues. If we missed some, updating happens. The Board tries to stay on top of the issues. The way the school is going, I'd like to see things going. They're getting to the nitty-gritty. I feel strongly about it and give it a lot of support."

Two other respondents were not so positive. The parent conceded that perhaps those issues that had importance to her personally were not appropriate for a planning session, "Maybe not entirely. Maybe I'm off track because people weren't buying into my idea. Some of the issues not dealt with maybe can't be dealt with in strategic planning, for example, the Minister, the principal in the school, discipline problems." The school administrator also felt certain kinds of issues were not addressed, "because those are the kinds of things that tend to disappear; for example, staffing, curriculum, wellness. It didn't put those together."

8. *Usefulness of the Plan*: A number of the respondents were positive about the quality or usefulness for them as individuals. The trustee respondent indicated that it provided direction and credibility for the system and that it was a document that could be used more to market the school system within the community,

> I can sit back and say things are going really well. I don't have to wonder where our system is going. I know where its going. It is working well because there's a lot of updating. We put a lot of that into the budget. I have it right here in my desk. When I get calls, I use it, with the media as well. I give it a lot of credibility. Many board members do this. It is deemed to succeed. The Board has taken an interest—a lot of attention at every Board meeting with our quarterly report. It is a living plan—it almost doesn't matter who was involved, with the idea that we can involve other people now. We might have to do some work in follow-up. It's a marketable document but I don't see we're using community opportunity to market it. We're not doing that enough.

The parent respondent expressed satisfaction with the quality of the Plan and saw potential for its use, "I'm satisfied with it. I did refer to the Plan in a letter to the Superintendent. The teachers or principal may use it." Use of the Plan outside and inside the system for communication purposes had occurred for the teacher respondent,

> I have referred to it at summer conference as what the Board and senior administration are working on with schools. Some people expressed interest in how it started and what were some of the critical issues. On updates, the information is brought back to us by our principal. I wonder if this happens at all schools. We can bring information down to the Local Council, through the principal at staff meetings.

The system administrator felt the Plan was received positively by readers, that it was useful in providing focus for the Board priorities and the administrative staff, and that more use could be made of the Plan at the community level,

> I use it a lot. I keep reminding the Board, in having the Board focus on the priorities instead of running off in a whole lot of directions. When we take proposals to the Board, it is incumbent upon us to relate them to the Plan. I haven't done a whole lot with it—the Chamber of Commerce, the COSAC (Committee of School Advisory Councils) group. I could have been more effective in this area. The document has been well-accepted, it has been circulated across Canada and with the senior officials of government. I have received nothing but compliments.

The school administrator involved in the study did not perceive the instrument to be of use to the public in its original form but indicated it could be personally useful,

> It is not something you would sit down and read. It's a reference document. It's easy to find ideas in it. It's not a marketing tool in its present form. Maybe for CEO'S but not the public. To summarize and highlight would be useful. The tabloids are more useful, a kind of brochure. I will reference the human resources part and use it as an argument to keep quality staff. I haven't used it a lot. I used it to put something in school objectives and used to argue for the school. I have used the action team process ideas. It refined some skills for me, it was a valuable experience. Yes, I think there's a lot we can take from it (the process). We are embarking on a major planning process over the next year and we will have a lot of these components in it. We will have a tool, a framework. I'll probably turn it upside down, as we'll go back to the teachers to come up with the ideas.

Five respondents commented on the effect the Plan, Toward 2000, was having on the school system and the community at large. All felt some positive effect was evident although they perceived that effect was occurring in different areas. The parent noted the aspects of the plan addressing the environment,

> Certainly stuff like the environment is working—I can see that in schools. I don't see how the other stuff is working. I'm not in a position to know what has gone on before. The reasons I'm not seeing a difference won't change. I believe it is being implemented but I'm not in a position to judge.

Both the environmental and communication priorities were perceived by the teacher to be effecting some change in the schools and the community,

> A lot of the plans seem to meld together, looking at another way of teaching. The staff development and coping strategies are relevant to these changes. The plan is affecting the community—the environment is a little bit. In some areas, to a large degree. The communication has improved. A lot more work is being done there. There is more awareness in the community, more awareness of people with no children in school.

The district administrator also observed the major impact thus far to be in the area of the environment, "It provided us with a focus for our work. The effect in the schools is the environment—the recycling. The next phase is to see the effect in schools—that's the next challenge. It's starting to have its impact and make inroads into the way we do things."

The school administrator felt the plan was working as it had resulted in decisions in particular areas, "In some areas, it's doing a good job. In the languages area, we were able to get some jobs done, decisions made by the Board. If that happens in all the plans, then that's valuable. The fact that it deals with issues and gets them to the Board is value enough."

Although feeling that the plan was a statement of support for the system teachers, and that it was beginning to be drive the budget and be supported by the Board, the trustee respondent perceived awareness of the Plan had not yet reached the community level,

> It says we're going to get our teachers on side first so they are given time o do this, not getting really dumped on. We decided to have an update at every board meeting. The document is alive, it helps because it comes to every meeting. I think the plan is starting to affect the Board. We have to review our organization. We're getting new committees generated by the plan. It's

> driving the budget. Certainly staff know about it, I don't think the community knows a whole lot about it. It might have an inkling but not that much because each school is doing their own thing, there is the perception that not much is happening. It needs more coordination.

Two members of the study commented on the effect the planning project should have on school-based planning. The parent believed, "Someone from the Board should be involved in a school's plan. It needs to fall within system parameters and policy. Need to keep the minds on the Strategic Plan." The system administrator commented on the importance of communication with the Board and senior administration,

> Your involvement with the school plan has been a plus. What's going on should have gone on between the principal and myself. I kind of feel in a vacuum about what it looks like. I would have preferred to have a member of the Superintendent's Team on the (school) Planning Team. It would be a terrible thing to happen if parts are totally unacceptable to me. If we get another school involved, we'd need to make sure that didn't happen.

Summary

The school district component of the case study briefly described the school system and presented the perceptual data gathered from the interviews of six individuals within the educational community of the system. As in the Alberta Education section, the data was presented in two themes, The Nature of the Organization, and Planning for Change Within the Organization. The same three aspects; the environment external to the school system, the role of the school system, and the climate within the organization were used to describe the nature of the organization. The second theme presented the beliefs about planning for change, the attitudes about stakeholder involvement in the planning process, and perceptions about the planning methodology used.

The School

Background

The school was a suburban high school housing approximately 1400 students and 78 staff. The majority of the staff had been in education between 15 and 20 years, in this district between 11 and 15 years, and in this school between six to ten years. The administrative team consisted of four administrators and a business manager. Academic, technical, and vocational programs were available to the students in the school, complemented by the International Baccalaureate and Learning Assistance Programs to meet unique needs of students, and the Continuing Education Program for adults in the community. Many co-curricular and extra-curricular activities ranging from Athletics and Performing Arts to chess and craft clubs were available for students. Parents were involved in the School Advisory Council, the Band Parents' Association, and other parent groups supporting student sports activities.

The data for the school component of the case study were collected from interviews conducted with 20 members of the school's Strategic Planning Project and the school questionnaire administered to the entire school staff. The interviews were guided by a series of questions about planning for change in education, the involvement of stakeholders in school planning, and specific aspects of the planning methodology. Particular questions on the staff questionnaire related to the questions used to guide the interviews. The data from the interviews and the questionnaire were combined into the same two themes, the Nature of the Organization and Planning for Change in the Organization, as it did for the Alberta Education and school district components.

The Nature of the Organization

The opening interview question asked study participants how they felt, generally, about planning for educational change in Alberta at the provincial, district and school level. The perceptions of the respondents were grouped into the same three factors that described aspects of the district and Alberta Education: (a) the environment external to the school, (b) the role of the school, and (c) the internal climate of the school.

The External Environment

The respondents perceived the environment external to the school to be affected by societal expectations, the leadership direction and policy decisions of Alberta Education, and the system planning and operation.

1. *Societal Expectations*: The societal expectations perceived of the school included performing family functions, educating the whole child and contributing to the country's ability to compete with other countries. One teacher believed that, "There is a need for more reality in people's lives. We are asking schools to do what the families should do. It is beyond the school to correct society. Schools are caught in the middle." A second teacher had contrasting views, "Society doesn't see educating the whole child as our job." Another respondent felt, "We can't go backward to the family structure, it changed faster than we were ready for it. If the high school doesn't change, it will be in the same dilemma as many businesses. It will fall by the wayside. The school district is several years behind the marketplace."

The comparisons of student and school achievement with other cultures were an element of societal expectations that concerned a parent, "I'm not sure the upper levels recognize what's out there with our children. There is artificial comparison with other countries." They also frustrated a trustee,

> I'm very frustrated that Alberta Education hasn't spoken to ASBA (Alberta School Boards Association) or the university. I gather they're doing it (planning) on their own. We're trying to live up to the Japanese or European model when we don't have the cultural support to do that. We need to create the Canadian model.

2. *Alberta Education*: Alberta Education's impact on the external environment of the school was perceived to be in three areas. Five respondents commented on the top-down approach. One administrator perceived the approach resulted in a lack of professional commitment to provincial directions,

> I don't think the provincial Vision statement is taken very seriously by staff. It is something that came from the top-down, they see it as a critique of what they're doing. Whatever comes (from the Department) is of vital importance to them. They say, "I have to change Science 10 next year. There is very little buy-in but there is acceptance of the mandate.

A teacher respondent rejected this approach, saying, "The province telling us how we're going to spend the next five years is unacceptable." Another participant believed the management style prevalent in the organization to be out-dated,

> Alberta Education is focusing on the outsider point of view. It is very male dominated, the management style does not reflect current research or effective management styles. Decisions are made from the top-down, with very little or no input from the people who are out in the field, the people facing the public. There is a lot of lip-service paid to planning but many action plans are written that are never implemented.

Four respondents perceived the second effect Alberta Education on the external environment of the school was the increased emphases on university preparation programs. One teacher observed, "People at Alberta Education don't want to stream but the whole program seems directed to university. Many students have to come back. Others want to take more courses but don't have the time and have to go to university." The respondent from Industry also expressed concern with the emphasis on academics, "I see a great need for change in the education system. Pushing kids into the academic route has been overdone. There will be no one to do skilled labour." A student described the pressure, "It's very hard to get into university. Dream's are smashed with quotas. Lots of students really tighten up on exams as a result. Standards are too tough for the average student."

The trustee respondent found the Minister's emphasis on academics and the Report Card on Education in the province discouraging given the efforts being made in the jurisdiction, "Parents wonder why the Minister is pushing the whole idea of marks. I have a real frustration with the B- (report card). There is no praise for what is being done in the system."

Seven respondents questioned the credibility of the knowledge base and the leadership directions of Alberta Education. One teacher commented, "I'm not sure the Secondary Education Review resulted in such good decisions. Provincial planners often have other agendas. They're not there to just make sure education works well". An administrator observed,

> I don't know how much involvement there is at the superintendent level with the Department and the Minister. A lot of decisions seem very political and designed for other reasons than for kids. Over the last three years, what's behind decisions seems more political than what's good for kids.

A parent believed, "The Minister should be a teacher—at least have a university education." Another teacher respondent expressed disappointment,

> . . . in the way the province has been going with Vocational Education. Students have been forced to take academic programs We should offer courses to see how students would choose, offer them if there are enough students enrolled. I feel very strongly about the lack of direction from Alberta Education. I feel let down, I don't think the students are getting what they need. Equipment is expensive and the funding isn't there.

Still another voiced concern about the cost of programs that were not "tested." "I don't know whether I agree with the implementation of new initiatives without research or piloting. Thousands of dollars are spent on new resources when we don't know for sure if they will work." A second administrator expressed concern that the "Time for teachers to implement new programs is not given by Alberta Education."

3. *The School District*: There were three elements in the district perceived to affect the external environment of the school: (a) the planning support, (b) the level of involvement and input, and (c) the support for school autonomy.

Four respondents commented on the support for planning in the system. As expressed by one parent, "I have never seen another district plan, but I'm impressed with ours. It's one of the reasons our system is a leader in the province." Another parent supported the Plan but emphasized the need for encouragement and support from administration and the Board for school level planning,

> You've got to plan to get results. Like the Vision, the (district) Plan, and now the school plan. Making a statement opens you up to criticism but not making a statement is like a person not shooting for a goal. School administration and board need to support and encourage and everyone else will come along. Strong positive support from the Board is needed.

The support for planning was also appreciated by a teacher respondent, "Planning is very interesting for me. This is a forward thinking system. We have had the financial resources to be that way. The school is lucky to have the support we do in the system." Another teacher voiced concern about resources for school-based planning being cut back, "A professional development day should be devoted to planning. Cutting back on the operational days is going the wrong way. Keep the extra day for school-based planning."

The second element of the district environment perceived to affect the school was the opportunity for input and involvement. One administrator indicated that "By and large, the system does a good job of planning. It hasn't lost sight of the people." Another reflected on the change that had occurred in opportunities for involvement over time,

> My impression about the way things work at the local level are pretty good—the way things are done well. Involvement is good. It may be my level of involvement but people feel they are involved in decisions that affect them. I've seen a lot of change in the way things are done. In the 1970's and 80's, it was very top-down. The exchange of ideas is more prevalent. Jobs in Central Office have been created to meet that need.

A parent respondent perceived, "The system asks how principals and teachers think about changes." A school administrator felt, "The potential for change is awesome. The district plan and school administration must drive it (change)."

Support for the level of autonomy at the school was identified by two respondents: a teacher who said,

> I have worked at three different levels of education. At the school and central office level, the planning and decision-making are much more autonomous. I have always appreciated that. One of the pleasure of coming back to the school system is that I can have an effect on children.

The administrator who observed, "The budgetary system is a good balance in this system. We have a good balance. We don't take advantage of the flexibility. I don't believe there should be a choice in schools about counselling or custodians for example."

The Role of the School

The second factor of significance that emerged with respect to the nature of the school was its role. The opinions on the topic related to the concept of "the basics" and accountability.

1. *Provision of the Basics*: For five respondents, the role of the school was to provide the basics. As one parent stated, "We've got to make sure students get a basic program." The respondent from Industry said,

> The role of the school is making people capable of continuous learning. People must keep learning—life of continuous learning. I'm not saying get back to the 3 r's but we can't neglect them. The critical issue is the quality of the product. Too few are going on to post-secondary. If not, are they prepared? I'm not suggesting its the job of the school to prepare students for jobs. Schools and industry have to work together to decide what skills those students need. Basic skills have to be focused on.

A trustee expressed concern about the scope of role, the need to reduce both course offerings, and the size of the school, "High schools are offering too much. Schools are too big to give a setting that is motivational. The school has taken on the parenting responsibility and now its trying to take on workplace responsibility. This leads to lack of motivation." A teacher questioned,

> Is school where we educate or look after social problems? We spend 80 percent of the time on 20 percent of the students. We need to look at what we are asking teachers to do compared to the rest of society. I'm not sure high school is where some of the 20 percent should be. I have difficulty with the statistics on drop-outs. We definitely need great change in the programs for 20 percent.

On the other hand, one parent believed the role was to provide broad exposure,

> High school is like going to a banquet and having to pick. The selection (of courses) has to be broad enough to give students exposure. You can't get into specifics, must be more general in nature. We've got excite the late bloomers. Extra-curricular classes kept me going. I found little bits of success outside the academics. High school is one step along the pathway of learning.

One student indicated, "Options are not open to students such as four years to complete the program, and taking some Vocational Education" whereas a teacher perceived, "The education being given is not appropriate for what students need. The off-campus, technology directions are good moves." Another respondent expressed concern, "I hate to see what's happening to young people. Maybe the demands on them are too great. We need to make students aware that they have to come and get it (education). Maybe they are too independent and education takes a back seat."

2. *Community Accountability*: Three respondents made reference to community accountability. One teacher perceived that accountability measures such as testing influenced teacher risk-taking, "Accountability (testing) limits how many risks teachers

take." An administrator believed, "Accountability is whether the job is being done—the bottom-line checks. Central Office should be establishing standards but not telling us how to do it." A parent respondent believed, "The community has to understand the school is operating in a manner that meets its expectations."

The Internal Climate

Three factors related to the internal climate of the school emerged from the data. These were (a) the leadership style in the school, (b) teacher responsibility for program delivery, and (c) concerns about change.

1. *Leadership Style*: Five respondents related shared leadership and staff involvement and risk-taking to the administrative style in the school. One teacher respondent supported the concept of shared leadership, "The principal has worked on shared leadership for a long time. Some staff don't like shared leadership—they see it as no leadership. It is one of the strengths of the school." A second was not so positive, "The administration has encouraged risk-taking and involvement. I'm not totally in agreement with a shared leadership style. This principal is more open and willing to share leadership." A third perceived, "A lot of decisions are based on a perception of what staff would like."

One administrator believed "Shared leadership means giving people what they need to do the job and letting them do it." Another felt the counselling knowledge of the administration facilitated the role of the "guide at the side." "One of the criticisms by staff is the counselling background of the administration. I think that has made a contribution to the direction of leadership—the desire to listen and guide."

Three respondents identified student leadership in the school as an element of school climate. Two of the three suggested student leadership positions as a way to get students more involved in their school. One stated, "Kids in the student council need a bigger role in selling their school, they need to get involved" and the other felt, "Right now the student council doesn't get that much feedback from the student body. Students didn't know about the planning process used. I like the idea that our ideas were addressed in the planning." The third respondent cited an example of students taking more responsibility for decisions in the way learning occurred, "Students wanted to be involved in deciding a project (in one of the courses) but it didn't work. But we learned from that."

2. *Teacher Responsibility for Program Delivery*: Three respondents emphasized teacher responsibility for the delivery of instruction. One parent believed, "The teachers need major responsibility for how programs are delivered because they're the ones who have to do it." An administrator said, "The decisions on how we deal with and relate to kids are things best left at the school level. The teachers' domain is the classroom and their methodologies are their own." A teacher respondent cautioned,

> Professionals decide the methodology. Elementary teachers cannot be curriculum developers, they need to be loving technicians. In high school, it depends on the individual teacher. Teachers have to be aware that if more responsibility is decentralized, that there are corresponding standards and accountability.

However, another expressed a different point of view, "Part of my job to be involved in planning—autonomy in my role and responsibility to take part in the planning." One administrator wondered whether teachers were ready for more responsibility, "The teaching staff have to take responsibility for planning how to deliver but are they prepared"?

3. *Concerns About Change*: Six concerns about change emerged from the views of the respondents about the school climate. These were identified as (1) the difficult nature of change, (2) the readiness of teachers, (3) the inhibiting factors in the school, (4) the changing nature of students, (5) the structural barriers, and (6) partnerships.

One administrator perceived the school staff did recognize the need for change, "We are inundated with criticism, ideas, desired change. It creates a recognition there is dissatisfaction out there," but he also believed that,

> Change is very difficult. Change is doubly difficult in education—we are soaked in tradition. Much of it is defined by what people do—like what teachers do. Many ideas have lost their way when they've been slightly

> adjusted, implemented at the classroom level. A person with new ideas often becomes frustrated and cynical because nothing changes at the "point of action." Schools can make some things different but there is a constant gravitation back to the traditional model that you have to be aware of. We can change the level of awareness of teachers—as one of the thrusts of strategic planning.

A teacher respondent commented that change takes time, "I think change is a very slow process." Another said, "Change is difficult and it takes time and support. Teachers will change when they know why and it makes sense." Change for experienced teachers was perceived as a particular challenge by one administrator, "It's very hard to ask people who have been doing the same thing successfully for 20 years to change the way they do things."

There were several perceptions about the readiness of teachers to change. As expressed by a student, "The school is conservative, open to new ideas, but they are not pursued usually." A teacher respondent said, "We are still delivering in the same way when students need to find their own way to learn." But another felt teachers were ready and were making changes, "A lot of staff are willing to take risks and try changes—changes for the sake of doing things better." A second teacher provided examples of that readiness,

> Many teachers have post-baccalaureate degrees, indication that they are life-long learners. Life without change is nothing. We welcome change. Teachers must accommodate and be comfortable with the changes. Teachers are receptive to changes now. Teachers have accommodated computer technology very well in the past 5 years.

Six respondents expressed views on conditions within the school that inhibited change for teachers. One administrator believed the workload of teachers was a factor,

> The workload expectations on teachers generally has increased so much that unless you're really able and committed and willing to spend a whole lot of your own personal life dealing with those kinds of things, (planning for the future), you can't expect a lot of change because people are at their limit.

Four respondents emphasized the importance of time in planning and implementing changes. As one expressed, "If school staff are to plan program delivery, they must have the time to do it." A second perceived,

> Teachers would plan for more individualization if they were given more time. Very few people are willing to give of their own time—they are giving as much as they are capable in order to keep sane and have a life outside. Teachers may not adapt to students because they don't have the time needed.

Two of the teacher respondents identified the attitudes of teachers as an inhibitor of change. One stated, "We've got to get a mind change first," and another said, "We've got to accept change is necessary, then decide how we're going to change within the possibility of the person." Another referenced the challenge of different teaching techniques for some individuals, "Some teachers do not have the personality for some of the changes such as cooperative learning." A fourth respondent perceived the lack of personal contact between teachers and students as an inhibiting factor in teacher readiness for change at the secondary level, "Teachers have lost the sensitivity to the individual child. Teachers are too specialized, they don't know the students because there are too many. There is no personal involvement. We lose our students between grades seven and nine."

A number of opinions were expressed about the changing characteristics of students and the influence on the climate within the school. A student respondent believed many students were trying to balance work and academic pressures: "Lots of students have part-time jobs. The focus is too much on grades and not enough on participation." One teacher observed that "The type of student is much different from five years ago. Different ethnic backgrounds are challenging the status quo. More tolerance is required." A third respondent believed, "We are now handling 100 percent of the students, no longer 60 percent." A fourth observed that, "Students today are literate in a different way." Another commented on the student leadership capabilities, "Students in the student council are very, very capable. I see so many more possibilities about how you could possibly structure things, how you could get input from kids. These kids are mature." One administrator predicted many of the changes in students were yet to come,

> We're going to see a real difference in students. Teachers need many more strategies to deal with all children's needs. Students who need confidence,

> hands on learning experiences ; they are suffering. Kids think the teacher is after them personally, not trying to help them. The knowledge of teachers about different learning styles is there but the level of awareness needs to be raised. Kids also need to be able to understand learning styles and what helps them.

The comments of two student respondents identified what was deemed to be a need for security of students; through peers, "When I was a new student and had the same students in my classes, that helped a lot."; and through direction, "Students do not need more independent responsibility, they need the direction."

Seven respondents identified the structural or organizational barriers to change which provided additional information on perceptions of the existing climate of the school for the study. One respondent reflected on the need for change in the way high schools provide programs, "I suspect we probably do need to change the delivery method. The method really hasn't been changed in a hundred years. Once teachers are in the classroom, they stay pretty much in the same mode." A teacher emphasized, "We need to teach students to use the information available—a process approach. It's not the need for change in how we view and approach students, but how we are able to view and approach them—the mechanisms we use to deal with them." The trustee believed, "Our administrators are not trained to do financial planning. The amount of courses are costing too much money and causing kids too much grief." One student observed, "The school offers such a wide variety of programs, it's hard to improve and get ideas together. It's difficult for programs to mix and I would really like to see that. I don't see anyone in Band or Food Preparation. I would really like to have taken some other programs." Another student "would like to see shorter time spent on some subjects or all year round subjects." One administrator perceived the present structure of delivering schooling to high school students to be out-of-date with their lives and their needs,

> In talking with my kids and their friends, not many kids like school because of what happens in school. Not many kids feel excited by the "electricity" in the air during diploma examinations as my older daughter does. Their kinds of observations indicate they like school for all the other reasons. They're fairly good students. That has to tell us something. Where does that leave all the other students on the other end of the continuum? We have so many kids that

> can't function in this "block of time," within the constraints of this structure. Kids don't live in that kind of structure anymore. They don't eat scheduled meals, nobody is there to get them get up on time.

A second believed the structure of school inhibited teacher-student effectiveness,

> School is where great teachers have the means to do great things. I would like to have more room to maneuver. At the classroom level, if you can get the right people, I've seen wonderful things happen with kids—miracle workers in action. A highly structured system doesn't work well.

Several respondents suggested the concept of partnerships had possibilities for changing the way the school operated and the resources available for students. The industry respondent believed,

> Business doesn't recognize the need to get involved yet as we put out some pretty good kids in this province. We want to help but we're not sure how or where. It's a matter of educating the public on the job market. Partnerships were really public relations when we had lots of money. We are doing things differently now. We have learned from the teachers. There's no money, just learning. School-based partnerships with SIA are a big step.

A parent thought, "Communication is important. We need to match up with industry. The partnership is good." However, one teacher perceived the business community to have other priorities, "Business is there to serve the customer and they're not going to take time to teach students. There's an apprenticeship program." One administrator believed, "More partnerships with parents and the community are needed." The trustee used a School Advisory Council as an example, "One SAC (School Advisory Council) has tackled and taken the responsibility for direction they thought education should go" and that parents would "bring resources because they own small businesses."

In addition to the perceptions obtained in the interviews, there were four questions on the Staff Questionnaire that requested information from staff who were not on the School Planning Team about their involvement in the district and school Strategic Planning. The responses provided information on the interest of staff in a different approach to planning and were deemed to relate to the internal climate of the school.

Question Four asked the staff to identify their level of familiarity with the district plan: 14 percent of the staff had studied the plan, 61 percent were familiar with the plan, 23 percent were aware of the plan, and two percent were not aware of the plan.

Question Five asked the staff to identify their involvement with the district plan: 80 percent were not involved, two percent were members of an implementation committee, 18 percent were members of an action team, and zero percent were members of the planning team.

Question Six asked the staff to identify their level of desired involvement in the school strategic planning project: 34 percent indicated they were not involved, 32 percent felt they were members of staff decision-makers, 27 percent were members of an action team, four and a half percent were action team leaders, and two percent did not answer.

Question Seven asked the staff to describe their attitudes about school-based strategic planning: 25 percent were very positive, 43 percent were somewhat positive, 27 percent were neutral, four and a half percent were somewhat negative, and zero percent were very negative.

Planning for Change in the Organization

Data for this theme emerged from three interview questions: (1) Generally, how do you feel about the planning for education at the school level? (2) Generally, how do you feel about the need for change in how the high school programs are provided to students in the school? and (3) Who do you think should have the major responsibility for planning how the high school programs are to be provided to students in the school? As in the Alberta Education and the School District components of the case study, the theme Planning for Change in the Organization is developed through three factors as well: (a) beliefs about planning, (b) attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and (c) the planning methodology.

4. Which on of the following best describes your level of familiarity with the Strategic Plan?

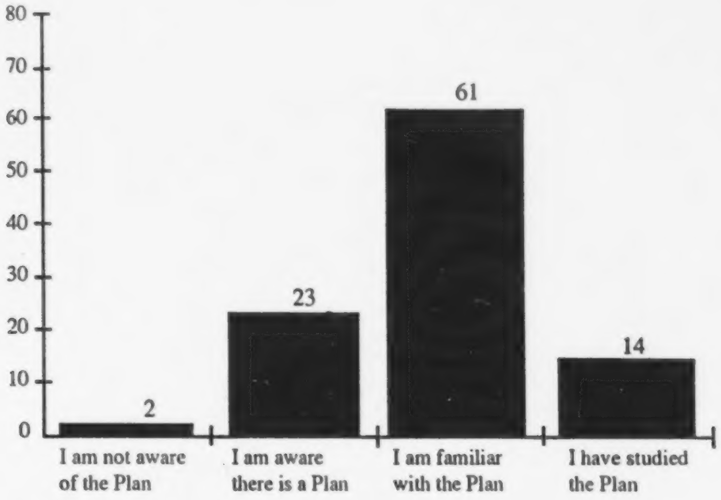

Figure 5. Level of Familiarity with the District Plan

5. Which one of the following best describes your involvement with the Strategic Plan?

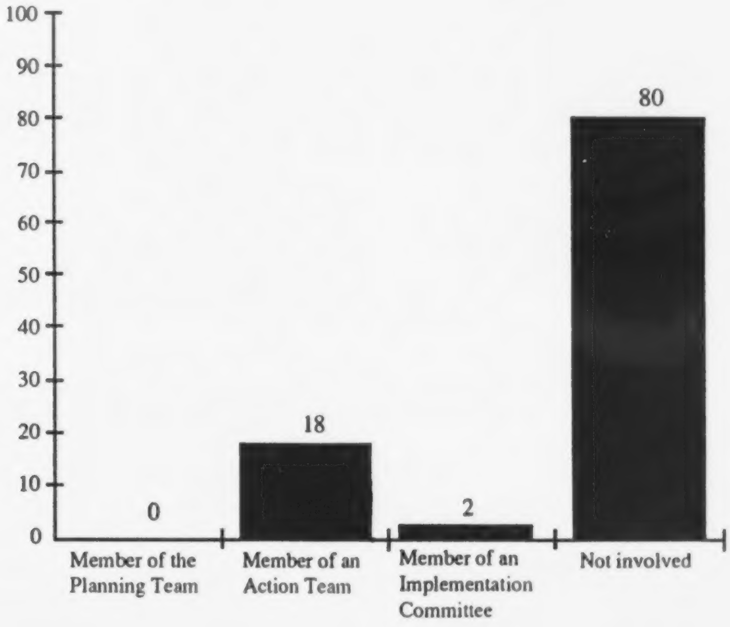

Figure 6. Involvement with the District Strategic Plan

6. Which one of the following best describes your desired involvement in the High School strategic planning project?

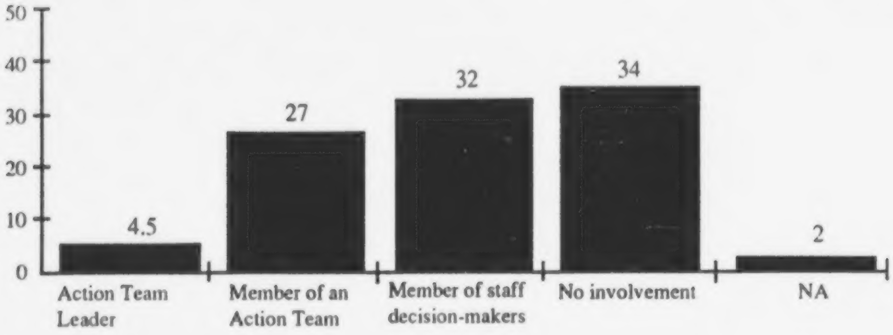

Figure 7. Desired Involvement in the School Planning Project

7. Which one of the following best describes your attitude about the school-based strategic planning?

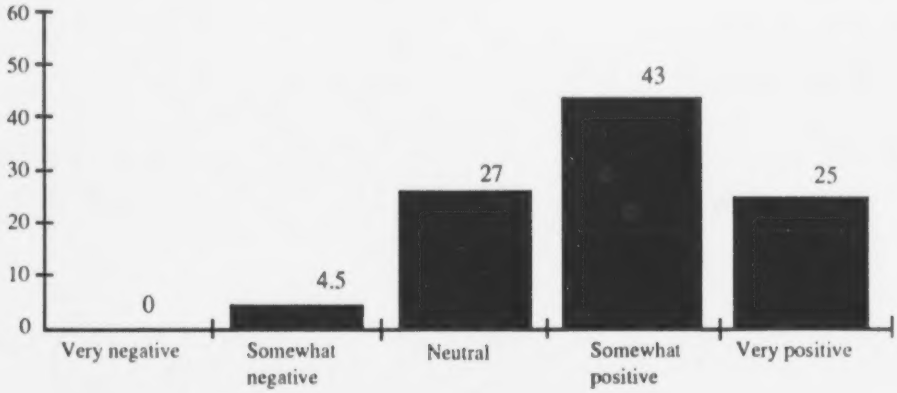

Figure 8. Attitudes About School-Based Strategic Planning

Beliefs About Planning

The information provided by study participants about the school's approach to planning seemed to answer three questions that were not asked: (1) What is Planning for Change at the School Level? (2) Why is School Planning Necessary? and (3) Who Should take Responsibility for School Planning?

Four respondents commented on what planning for change at the school level meant to them. For the administrator,

> The school-level notion of long term planning is a relatively new one. We have taken provincial structures and curriculum and communicated expectations, simply doing what had to be done with kids at the school level. Until the last five years, you didn't see anything resembling planning. Even at Alberta Education I saw little evidence that they were thinking ahead. Now there's an attempt to look five to ten years ahead. Anything that happens has to take into account the reality that getting changes at the instructional point has proven to be extremely difficult. The overriding condition has to be that something happens in the classroom instruction.

For a teacher respondent, it was the principal's way of taking advantage of an opportunity. "It is brave of the principal to have this process going on. I'm really pleased with the work the principal does to get ideas accepted by staff and get the best out of situations. This is his way of doing things." For a second teacher, it was a way to have input and be accountable to the public, "There are many different levels of planning. In school I feel that your views are accepted and appreciated and considered in planning. In particular areas, long range plans are a necessity. Public opinion is your bread and butter." To a third, it was what the school had been doing, "The school has involved teachers in planning. Teachers priorize the goals brought in from administration. Committees are set up to look at each priority."

Twelve respondents expressed views about why school planning for change was necessary. As one parent said, "We should be planning for change rather than reacting." An administrator stated,

> Unless we start to change, someone else will do it for us. The alternatives are to continue doing what we're doing or administration coming up with ideas the others wouldn't accept. This is a means to go somewhere. We are able to superimpose the county structure on this school because of our size. The strategic planning process focuses action and I prefer that high pressure.

One student perceived "The school has to plan for a larger community and a more diverse curricula. Older staff will be retiring and replaced—that takes planning." Another felt, "Doing this (strategic planning) makes it more specific to the school." Three other respondents indicated there was a need to address current school problems: for a teacher, it was "probably the perfect time for a plan like this—we've been talking about problem areas and a plan like this would help." For the trustee, it was a way to do

> . . . more school-based planning in finance. I have a feeling that we should be providing what the student need—e.g., *Calm* (Career and Life Management course)—students are saying we have heard these things for five years. Somehow we have to cull the courses to a skeleton of what students want and need. Make sure we do that well and they all get that. Maybe there is some extra-curricular way, quasi-continuing education, of offering kids the other interest areas.

For an administrator, it was "better to address concerns than to hide them. People in leadership positions have to be the keeners to help bring the teachers along. The power base has to support the changes." The need to bring education into the community was emphasized by one respondent, "Planning takes education out of the traditional—home, parent, business, school. I feel very strongly they are not separate as they have been." For another, there was a need was to have common purpose, "It is a good idea to have a general plan so we have the same aims and goals." Two other respondents identified the need to keep people moving ahead; one believed, "No planning results in falling back on the same old thing" and the other felt, "The drawback is that of human nature—people resist change, they get locked in."

Nine respondents commented on where they felt the responsibility for school planning should lie. Five identified the principal or the school administration as having responsibility for school planning. One teacher felt, "The principal is doing it the right way at the school level." Another respondent perceived, "You need a good administrator to oversee the (plan) program." A third believed,

> The person who is really responsible has to be the principal in the end but it has to be a collaborative decision. The principal first introduced the possibility of strategic planning when they (staff) were setting goals and objectives. He divided everybody up in groups. A couple of the groups said that "If, in fact, we use this process, this will identify the issues so our group recommends we use this process." There were a couple of groups who said, "This makes good sense."

Another administrator addressed the responsibility for planning this way, "Schools must be accountable for what they decide to do. Strategic Planning has pretty good potential for things that will serve us well. It has limitations for small schools." One of the students believed, "The school and the parents should be taking the responsibility." A teacher respondent referenced the responsibility of staff,

> There is again the cynic's view that we've gone through a hell of a lot in this district, sitting and planning for hours and then seen everybody continue in the same old way and there's a fear this will do the same unless we make a marked effort. It's got to come from us—unless we change, it won't happen. I think the biggest fear is that it (planning) won't take effect. We've probably got to be pushed, bullied and bludgeoned.

The questionnaire administered to the school staff also contained the question, Which of the following best describes who you feel should make the decision about how the school planning process is to be done? The responses indicated that 36 percent of the staff believed the principal, staff, student council and school advisory council should decide; 23 percent felt the principal and staff should decide; 16 percent indicated the principal, staff, and school advisory council should decide; 11percent identified the principal and administration team; and five percent said the principal, staff and student council should decide how school planning is done.

Attitudes about Stakeholder Involvement

The general question about stakeholder involvement asked of School District and Alberta Education respondents was not asked at the school-level. The question addressed to the 20 respondents in the interviews inquired about their reactions to the actual distribution of stakeholder representatives on the Planning Team. Responses to the question on representation were addressed in the Planning Methodology. However, the general attitudes of respondents about stakeholder involvement in planning in the school emerged within the context of other guiding questions in the interviews.

Eight respondents commented on why stakeholders should be involved. A parent explained,

> I really enjoy being involved in the school advisory council—it demystifies it (education). I'm pleased about the school plan and to be involved. It has opened the door for many different stakeholders to be part of the planning

> process. The community has to plan together, not a million polls—a representation from the primary stakeholders.

For the business respondent,

> There is an opportunity for business to play a leadership role. Our company is going through tremendous changes in house. We have a draft agreement with the university. We are a big supporter of the school system but have limited funds. I've been involved in a lot of things. The school partnership is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. Our company has always offered work experience but never used it as a learning /teaching mechanism.

A teacher emphasized, "We have to listen as we are supported by the taxpayer." An administrator commented on the valuable input from people outside the school, "I'm always impressed with the ideas of people who are not attached to the education system. Getting input to establish direction is really important." One teacher believed, Sometimes teachers get tunnel vision and need an outside view."

The respondents identified several different stakeholders they perceived should be involved in school planning for change. Nine of the respondents specifically referenced parents as people who should be involved. A trustee identified students as the beneficiary of parent involvement, "From an educational standpoint, we need to do more planning with parents on how we are handling student needs." Another respondent agreed, "More parent involvement would be good. It makes things easier for the students."

Nine respondents also identified students as important stakeholders in school planning. One emphasized the role they could play, "At the high school level, I have no question that students have to play a really major role. There's more maturity in students than what I expected." A teacher respondent felt students needed to be involved but with others as well so as to provide a longer-range perspective, "It's a good idea to have students involved but they are too-short-sighted to see everything. Parents need a say. Experts in planning need to be involved." One student believed student leaders wanted to be more involved, "I was quite surprised to see how much interest in it when we went around to classes; they seemed quite interested in it (strategic plan). People at the school

15. Which of the following best describes who you feel should make the decision about how the school planning process is to be done?

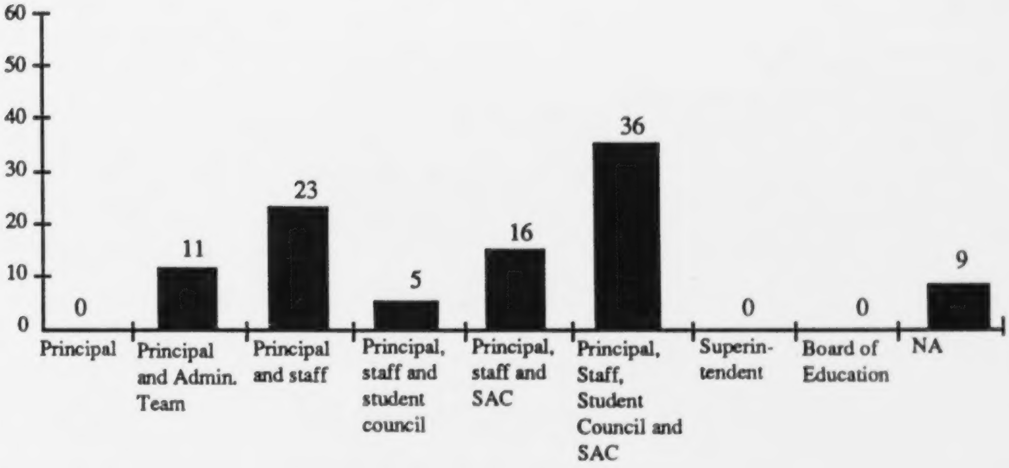

Figure 9. Who Should Make Decisions About Planning?

were quite involved in sharing ideas about it. I think Student Council would like to be more involved in the decision-making."

Seven respondents perceived representatives of the education and local community should be involved in school planning for change. One teacher believed

> . . . there should be representatives. We are a community. Certainly different viewpoints are brought in and we often don't think about that as we're too focused on our own ideas. We've got to have liaison amongst further education, employers, students, parents, educators, as we are often coming from different directions.

A student felt "a team approach would be best. It disappoints me that students don't get involved. People who are affected should be involved—students in the programs, their parents, administration, teachers and community who are affected."

Three individuals believed stakeholders inside the system should be the ones involved in school planning. For example, the industry respondent saw, "Students and staff in a leadership role, parents in a participatory role. Staff have the information and experience that makes them leaders in planning. No one group can do by itself." A parent respondent stated, "We've got to involve parents, kids—kids in the vocational programs too, and others. Invite teachers to be involved." Two respondents referred specifically to teachers as stakeholders that had to be involved; an administrator who believed, "Greater involvement of people at the school level is a positive force—teachers especially as a lot are not interested in administration", and the teacher who emphasized. "Teachers at the school level have to be involved. Teachers are involved at three levels—system, school and classroom."

One respondent specifically identified the business community as a stakeholder needing to be involved, "Get business more involved in education." Two others identified the importance of business representation in their explanations about why stakeholder involvement was an important ingredient of school planning.

Additional data on the attitudes about stakeholder involvement were obtained through the Staff Questionnaire administered to the school-based personnel. Four questions on the questionnaire requested the school staff to indicate how they felt about particular groups of people being involved in the school-based planning team. The groups identified in the questions were parents, students, community members, and Central Office. Although the questions specifically referred to involvement on the Planning Team, the focus was on how the staff member felt about the involvement of a particular group, not how they felt about the representation.

Question Eight asked the staff to indicate how they felt about parents being involved in the school strategic planning team: 32 percent were very positive, 50 percent were somewhat positive, 14 percent were neutral, two percent were somewhat negative, zero percent were very negative, and two percent did not answer the question.

Question Nine asked the staff to describe how they felt about students being involved in the school strategic planning team: 32 percent were very positive, 46 percent

8. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about parents being involved in the school strategic planning team?

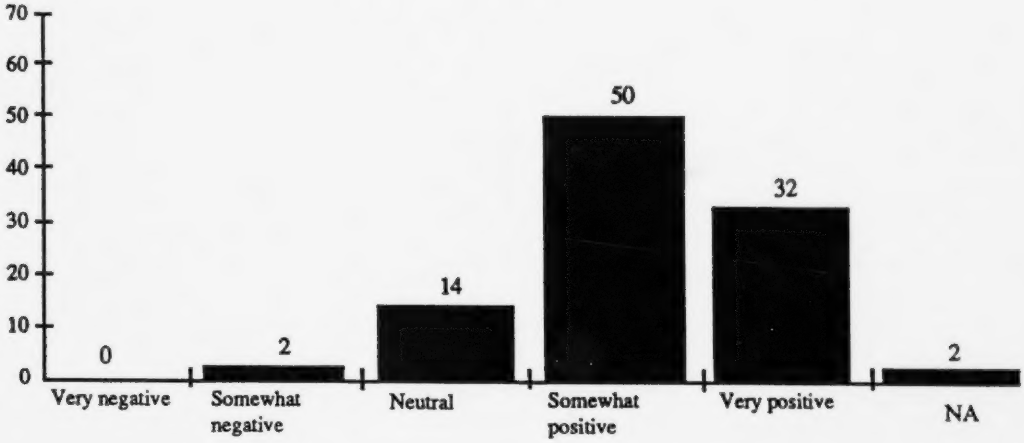

Figure 10. Response to Parent Involvement

9. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about students being involved in the school strategic planning team?

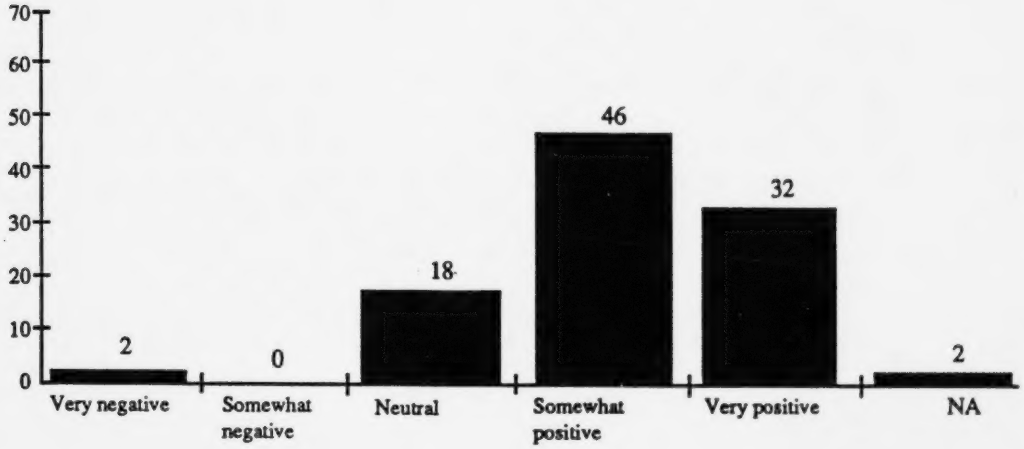

Figure 11. Response to Student Involvement

were somewhat positive, 18 percent were neutral, zero percent were somewhat negtative, two percent were very negative, and two percent did not answer the question.

Question 10 asked the staff to describe how they felt about community members being involved in the school strategic planning team: 34 percent were very positive, 41 percent were somewhat positive, 21 percent were neutral, five percent were somewhat negative, and zero percent were very negative.

Question 11 requested the staff to describe how they felt about a central office representative being involved in the school strategic planning team: 32 percent were very positive, 42 percent were somewhat positive, 16 percent were neutral, nine percent were somewhat negative, and zero percent were very negative.

The Planning Methodology

By design, the data collected on the third aspect of planning for change in the school, the planning methodology, was specific to the Strategic Planning methodology. Several interview questions asked the respondents to focus on particular aspects of the methodology. These were:

1. Their personal reactions to the strategic planning sessions
2. Their views on the representation of stakeholders on the Planning Team
3. The perceived challenges of the project
4. The perceived shortcomings,of the project
5. The perceived strengths of the project
6. The opportunity for individual contribution
7. The critical issues identified
8. The effect of the district plan
9. The quality of the Plan produced
10. The facilitation
11. The presence of the researcher
12. The potential for future change.

1. *The Personal Reactions*: Eight respondents indicated that they had experienced personal change as a result of being involved in the strategic planning experience. For example, one administrator commented,

> At the beginning, I wasn't very positive about it because of the time—maybe the end results could be achieved a lot more efficiently and maybe just as good, I don't know. After being involved, I don't feel that way at all. I think it's a really good idea.

10. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about community members being involved in the school strategic planning team?

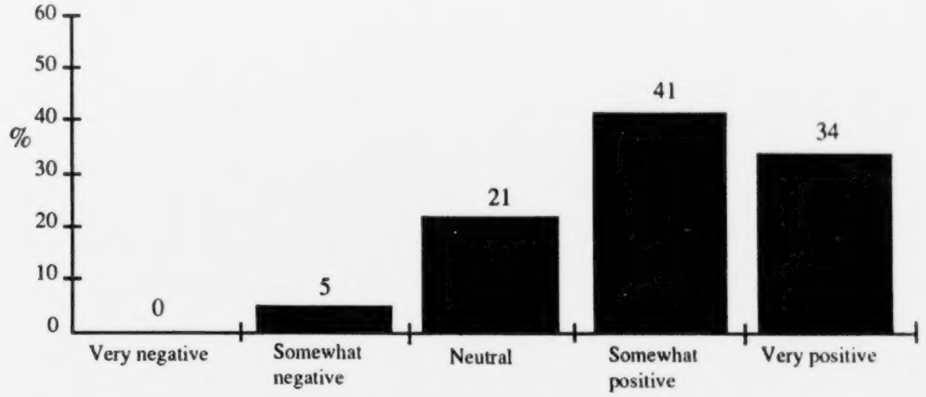

Figure 12. Response to Community Involvement.

11. Which one of the following best describes how you would feel about a central office representative being involved in the school strategic planning team?

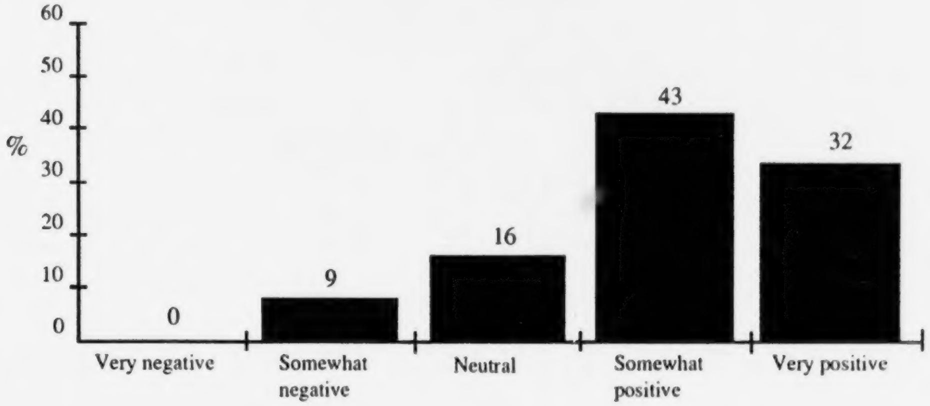

Figure 13 Response to Central Office Involvement.

For a student respondent, it was a learning experience, "I certainly learned a lot. If I had the chance, I would do it again. I learned things about the school that I didn't know before and it gave me a chance to share what I know about the school." A teacher said, "I feel quite good about it. I was wary to start with. I really enjoyed the experience. I have more empathy for various stakeholders."

Eight respondents found the experience positive or satisfying. As expressed by one teacher, "I had a good feeling when it was over. I reflected on what I should personally be doing in my own job—it gives me another dimension to work from. I thought about why most kids, if honest, don't like school, even if they're doing well." The trustee respondent also reactived positively, "I'm very impressed with the principal and how open he was to criticism of his school. Another feeling was how many positive things are happening in the school." Another administrator "was quite impressed by the extent to which staff bought in. That was one of my real concerns from day one—that there would be little or no enthusiasm."

Two respondents felt some anxiety related to the experience. The student "felt trepidation," As a school we have very little to lose. Perhaps the principal does because you open the doors and people may not like what they see." Two other respondents indicated the experience was strenuous. As one stated, "I was relieved when the strenuous days were over but I would do it again."

2. *Stakeholder Representation*: The responses to the question about how participants felt about stakeholder representation on the planning team were grouped into several categories by positive or negative response. The groups included trustees, students, parents, central office, staff, and business.

There were 11 "positive" and two "negative" responses for trustee representation. A teacher respondent reasoned, "Trustee involvement is good. It's important that they are aware of the problems and they can take it back to the board. We learn about their perspective. I hope there is more interaction between the Board and schools." A student respondent wanted the trustee to know, "This is the face you affect when you do something."

Student representation was viewed positively by respondents with five indicating "more" were needed and nine feeling "more varied" representation from the student body was needed. As expressed by one of the administrator respondents, "We were looking for representatives from the non-academic student. It's frustrating, disappointing but they are the ones who have and will continue to impact their world. Administration struggled trying to get a variety of students." A student respondent observed, "At first the principal wanted a broader base but the person from Vocational Education had a prior commitment. I think the representation was quite diverse. It would have been a little more effective with representatives from other programs." A teacher's view was that, "The students offered valuable insight but student representatives didn't represent the student body, there were no at-risk students." One parent had a suggestion for the time concern, "It is hard for low academic students to miss school for the planning team. Those on the Planning and Action Team were excellent, more academic. Students could do assignments on the planning and get credit for it."

There were six "positive" and five "negative" reactions to the inclusion of Central Office representation. One administrator stated, "I don't think at this stage central office representation is wanted or needed. Freedom to explore is needed with no constraints." However, a trustee perceived "It would have been valuable to have someone there from Central Office to get their perspective. There seemed to be a gap in the knowledge."

There were seven positive, one negative and two "mixed" responses with respect to parent representation. One respondent said, "We could have used a couple more parents." A student "thought it was neat to have teacher who were also parents. Some of the parents had businesses in the community." A teacher perceived, "There is a reluctance at high school for parents to get involved. I would have liked more parental involvement in the Planning Team and the Action Teams."

Staff representation was viewed by four respondents as "positive" but two felt there should have been "less" staff. A parent commented, "It might have been skewed to teachers. I hope we can identify the intent was not to be self-serving but how can we really improve education in the school." One teacher perceived, "Everybody that should have been involved were involved. Maybe too heavily represented by administration."

Although positive about the representation, a student respondent wondered whether one stakeholder had been omitted in the process, "I don't think there was anyone from community representing the taxpayer." With respect to the representation from business, there were three "positive" response and four "more" responses.

Collectively, there were seven positive responses for business, 11 for trustees, 14 for students, seven for parents, six for central office and four for staff. The qualifying factors were identified as well.

3. *Challenges in the Planning Methodology*: The respondents identified nine different areas that they perceived to be challenging or frustrating in the strategic planning sessions. In descending order of frequency, these were:

1. Synthesizing the information
2. Coming to consensus
3. Differentiating between strategies and objectives
4. Time constraints
5. Lack of control
6. The level of interaction
7. The educational terminology
8. Communication of process and results
9. The follow-up necessary as a result of the planning activity.

With respect to the most challenging activity, the objectives and strategies, one teacher found, "Implications for five years made objectives difficult." A parent indicated, "We weren't clear on objectives and strategies. It is not a relaxing process." One administrator identified the challenge of synthesizing information, "because everything was so important." A student "was surprised to see how easy it was to write down the strengths of the school but really difficult to narrow down problems to four. People were more willing to compromise on the strengths." The trustee respondent was frustrated by the consensus process, "I had certain expectations and was a little frustrated by how consensus was arrived at. I think people gave in rather that strive for a higher level." One teacher respondent found, "The lack of control is a difficult experience and takes adjusting." Another "felt dreadful in some of our meetings. It constantly felt like we were groping our way along. I don't like leading a group when I'm not in control." An administrator commented, "We tried not to dominate and not to go in with an agenda." The business respondent provided a suggestion for the challenge of educational jargon, "Terminology was a bit of a problem. I had to have help from others at the table. Business people need a half day orientation to school system and terminology."

4. *Shortcomings of the Planning Project:* The respondents identified six different areas of weakness or concerns in the strategic planning methodology. These included:

1. Communication
2. Lack of preparation
3. Time constraints
4. Lack of representation
5. Facilitation
6. Lack of literature base
7. A top-down initiative.

Concerns about communication, the lack of preparation for the planning sessions, and the time constraints on the process were felt to be of concern for the greatest number of respondents. The lack of literature base and concerns with facilitation were viewed as problems by the fewest number of participants. One teacher said, "Dissemination of information at the beginning was confusing. You need to get right to the nuts and bolts and how it will help the school. You need to emphasize the opportunity for input."

The need for a planning team representative on each action team was a communication concern identified by a parent, "The Action Team was really condemning about the extra work. It needs someone who was on the planning team." A teacher respondent explained, "Communication of planning team to the action teams could have been stronger—expectations communicated." Communication with the staff that were not involved was a concern of one administrator, "Not much opportunity to share the experience. Teachers are busy with a new semester. They need time—the attitude is yes, I like this but I've got enough work to do right now."

Another respondent was concerned about time to complete the process appropriately,

> Time constraints. I'm not sure something didn't get lost. We probably should have followed the process more closely after the staff presentation to get the Action Team leaders when staff were really high. The process lost momentum. We should have met more often with the Action Teams. The Action Team leaders need a bit more inservicing. I don't think there was enough time given to them.

A student identified both time and representation as shortcomings, "Everyone was really tired on the last day and you could feel the tension. It didn't change the effectiveness of what we were doing. There was no representation from the other programs. An extra day to have some more time."

One administrator believed there was a negative effect on the project motivation because the idea came from the senior administration, "While the Strategic Planning is bottom up, the idea is top-down. The idea coming from you made it more difficult. The fact is, the idea was yours."

5. *Strengths of the Project*: The respondents were asked to identify the strengths of the planning process as they perceived them. The strengths that emerged were:

1. The structure and discipline of the process
2. The leadership initiative
3. The involvement of others
4. The personal growth
5. The buy-in or commitment of staff
6. The location.

In terms of the structure and discipline of the planning process, one administrator found, "The process seemed quite workable." A teacher perceived, "It was more valid than some professional development activities I've been in."

One teacher felt the plan illustrated, "we are concerned about kids and we are looking at some of the problems and attempting to do something." Another said, "It's great that we are taking the initiative to do this." An administrator identified several strengths of the process,

> I was quite impressed by the extent to which the staff bought in. The opportunity to involve students, parents, classified staff, in the debate. I think it was a worthwhile structure for involving stakeholders. It is the first planning that I've been associated with that has gotten down to the nitty-gritty of learning—working with kids—past the cosmetics.

One teacher observed, "It was voluntary so we had the motivation too. I was very pleased that a spin-off was that teachers who in ten years hadn't taken an actual role in planning jumped in. A real breakthrough."

A parent identified the strengths as the, "Excellent facility. The process was excellent for tapping strengths. There was opportunity for people to learn more about the school system." One of the students perceived, "It gave me a chance to know the teachers on a more personal basis."

6. *Opportunity to Contribute*: Although there were general references to the opportunity to interact, and the open, comfortable atmosphere during the planning sessions, a specific question asked respondents was, "How effective the strategic planning session was perceived to be in encouraging each individual to share concerns, contribute ideas and expertise?" The responses fell into three categories: built-in barriers, effective or comfortable, or very effective. Nine individuals felt the session was very effective in encouraging them to contribute, seven felt it was quite effective, two felt there were barriers built into the process.

One student respondent believed, "It was very effective because I did feel like I could say my ideas. Sometimes in the group, I got the feeling others thought my ideas were a little student-like—that's wrong, glances. I actually thought there would be more than there was." A parent felt "the issues I wanted to see discussed got a good hearing. I might not rank them the same, within our group we were really open. All were welcome to say what they wanted and everybody listened. Staff and administration did not dominate the process." One teacher respondent perceived, "It was as effective as you're going to get anything like that. Everybody contributed. Some of the things I said are there and I think everybody could say that." A parent observed, "This is quite a different approach than the normal management approach. It gave the opportunity for everyone in the room to particip

An administrator identified "some built-in constraints—groups of parents and students without administrators and teachers might have come up with something different. There were some barriers. People were not as direct as they might have been if not concerned about offending others."

7. *Critical Issues*: Another question asked respondents whether they felt the participants got involved in examining the real issues of high schools today and whether the issues that emerged were the critical ones for them as individuals. Of the 19 responses relating to that question, eleven were categorized as unsure or having doubts, six were positive, and three were negative.

One parent felt, "The intent was there to do that. I believe we did. Limiting it to four was a product of logistics, not the process." A teacher said, "Yes, we really addressed the human issues. Not the details." A student agreed, "Yes, I think we discussed most of the critical issues." Another teacher responded, "Overall the atmosphere was yes, we've done something about our critical issues. The last couple of years the atmosphere has taken a downward turn because of things that we felt should have happened."

One administrator differentiated between real and important issues, "I don't think you can get at the real issues. People wouldn't agree. The process forces you to go with important ones. The issues are very important ones. They will find agreement with staff." One respondent that was unsure felt more time was needed on the issues, "We probably could have used another half day, more time to focus on issues rather than define what we were doing." A teacher felt the focus was not to be on specific problems, "No, we didn't. We wanted it to be broadly based so didn't zero in on problems."

8. *The Effect of the District Plan*: In order to determine whether the district plan influenced or constricted the school planning process in any way, one of the guiding questions for the interviews asked, "What effect do you think the school system strategic plan had on the planning process"? A total of 19 responses to this question indicated the

district plan had little or no effect. Thirteen individuals felt it had some effect, four felt it had little or no effect, and two were unsure of the effect.

One administrator stated, "The planning at the school wouldn't have happened if there wasn't a district plan." Another indicated, "It was not a major contributor. It didn't affect what we were doing particularly. There was general agreement with the district direction." A teacher believed, "It limited the scope of action. It takes the district plan to the level of the school." One parent felt it was used appropriately, "I don't think it had a lot of effect. We understood what was in it and referred to it from time to time. It was respected for what it is." Another respondent believed,

> . . . it provided an overall framework in which the school one could occur and that's essential. You certainly couldn't have all the schools going around doing strategic planning and have any system direction. You've got to have some system beliefs set down. I think that because we included the system mission statement and beliefs, it provided a starting point for the groups.

9. *The Product of the Project:* Perceptions on the quality of the school plan produced from the planning project was deemed to be a significant aspect of the school study. Out of 18 responses, nine of the respondents reacted favourably towards the Plan but had some suggestions to make, eight felt very favourably about it, and two indicated some disappointment.

As expressed by one administrator, "We asked some of the right questions. The Action Teams have something to work with." A parent "was glad it came quickly, that it was mailed to me. I felt I had ownership. I would have liked to see the members and group they represented listed. The external and internal analysis should be included to make it stronger."

A teacher "felt okay about it. It was fairly sketchy but representative of what we went through." A student said, "I was pretty impressed that all the work came to be something. I was pretty proud to be able to say, "hey, look what I helped to do." Another student had "been trying to get everyone to read it. Students should have a chance to read it and ask questions. I'm really proud of what we came up with." Another respondent represented a moderate view of the product, "A good product, but not an excellent one" and one teacher was "not sure the age of teachers factor was accommodated in the planning process."

10. *Facilitation of the Planning Project*: In order to determine the significance of stakeholder contribution to the school planning process, it was important to obtain data on the effect of facilitators on the planning process. Opinions on this aspect were expressed within the context of the responses to questions on strengths, shortcomings, challenges. As well, a specific question was included in the interviews, "What do you feel are the advantages and/or disadvantages of using facilitators from inside the school system?" The responses were categorized as (a) Insider Advantage, (b) Outsider Advantage, (c) Both Advantage, (d) Positive Effect, and (e) Negative Effect. Although there appeared to be some confusion about who was inside or outside the school system, some information was obtained.

Four respondents perceived advantages to having facilitators from inside the school system, four felt having facilitators from outside the school district was useful, four saw advantages to having both one from inside and one from outside the school, eight perceived the facilitators had a positive effect on the process, and two contained some criticism interpreted as a negative effect. One administrator commented on "inside" facilitators, "It was probably an advantage having people who understand the workings of the educational system." The industry respondent felt "The facilitators did an excellent job. Give them a pat on the back. They handled themselves very well." One teacher expressed some advantages to "outsider" facilitators, "There are pros and cons. Going with insiders is biased towards what worked here in the past. For an outsider, it's easier to look at the process and not get bogged down in the content." The positive atmosphere the facilitators created at the planning session was appreciated by one respondent, "They were friendly but also removed and had some familiarity of the school. The personalities worked well." An administrator "felt comfortable with the two facilitators."

The comments categorized as negative were those of a parent who stated, "My preference is an outsider. They don't come with biases, it's a cleaner process. There is potential for built-in biases if an insider"; and the student who thought the facilitators were "Maybe a little set in their ways."

11. *The Effect of the Collaborative Researcher*: Another factor considered relevant to the significance of stakeholder involvement and contribution was the effect of a researcher on the process. The direct question asked of the respondents was, "What do you think was the effect of having a collaborative researcher present, observing, taking notes, and recording?" The responses were categorized as having (a) no effect, (b) not intrusive, and (c) an initial effect. Six individuals felt there was no effect, six felt the presence was not intrusive, and five indicated an initial effect that later disappeared.

An administrator who felt there was no effect stated, "I didn't view you any differently than the recording secretary." A parent respondent stated, "You didn't exist to me. The process was more important and observers were of no importance." A student perceived no detrimental effect of an observer, "I don't think it had an effect on a lot of people. Once we got talking, we didn't realize anyone was listening." A teacher indicated an initial effect, "I was aware of you for about the first six minutes during the first meeting. I thought about you at the session and what you would do to mingle with the group."

12. *Results of the Planning Session:* The respondents were asked whether they thought there was potential for change in the school, as a result of the strategic planning. Four respondents expressed optimism that change would occur. One administrator thought, "Something will come out of it but I have no way of knowing what that will be." A teacher believed that, "People are asking about whether this will result in change means change has already happened, they've laid themselves open." A student perceived, "The strategic plan will help see changes." Another administrator believed the fact that "we are planning to address the concerns affecting this school" would result in some change.

Two questions on the staff questionnaire related to the data collected from the interviews. Question 12 asked the staff how they felt about the need for change in the way the high school program was provided to students in the school. 32 percent indicated they were very positive about the need for change, 46 percent were somewhat positive, 21 percent were neutral, two percent were somewhat negative, and zero percent were very negative (Figure 14).

Question 14 asked how staff felt about the potential for school-based strategic planning to result in changes to the way the high school program was provided in their school. 23 percentwere very positive, 50 percent were somewhat positive, 14 percent were neutral, nine percent were somewhat negative, and two percent were very negative (Figure 15).

Several interview respondents saw potential for change but felt there were other factors involved. One of those factors was perceived to be future hiring. As expressed by one administrator, "Administration will be more affected by the process. The next principal is going to have to view the process as valuable. It will have an impact on the selection of the individual. "A teacher also perceived the approach should impact on hiring practices, "If we believe this type of approach is important and should take place, we have to look at what kind of teachers and administrators are required in the County."

Eight respondents were positive about the results of the strategic planning initiative. Three commented on the student involvement, "The planning project is a really good opportunity for less involved student generally to get involved in the planning. It's really important to get people from all the programs." A student was optimistic about future change, "Strategic Plan is a good example of teamwork in decision-making. The process will not have an effect on the decision-making in the school right away but it could." Several saw the possible effects as an example for other schools. One teacher commented, "This would work well in some schools. I think there is a fair amount of potential for change—it comes from having a number of people involved. Probably that's the key—and having the leadership with the principal involved in the planning team."

One administrator expressed the hope that "what comes out of your thesis will provide

12. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about the need for change in how the high school program is provided to students in your school?

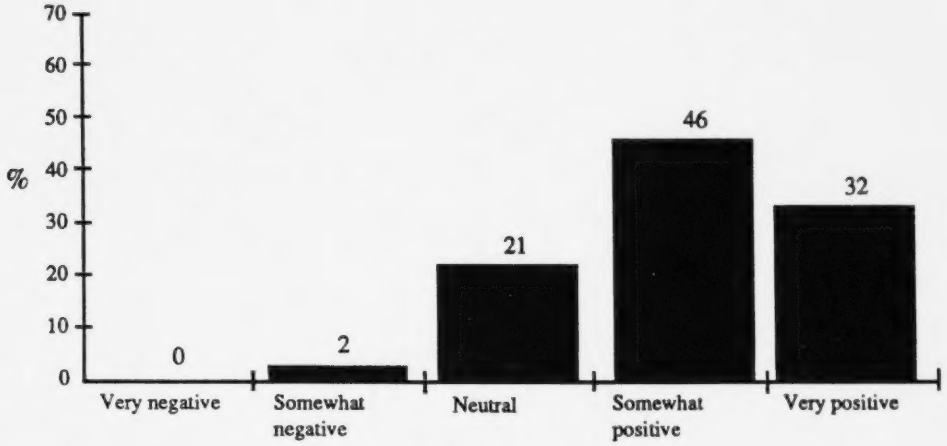

Figure 14. The Need for Change in the Delivery of the High School Program.

14. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about the potential for school-based strategic planning to result in changes to the way in which the high school program is provided to students in your school?

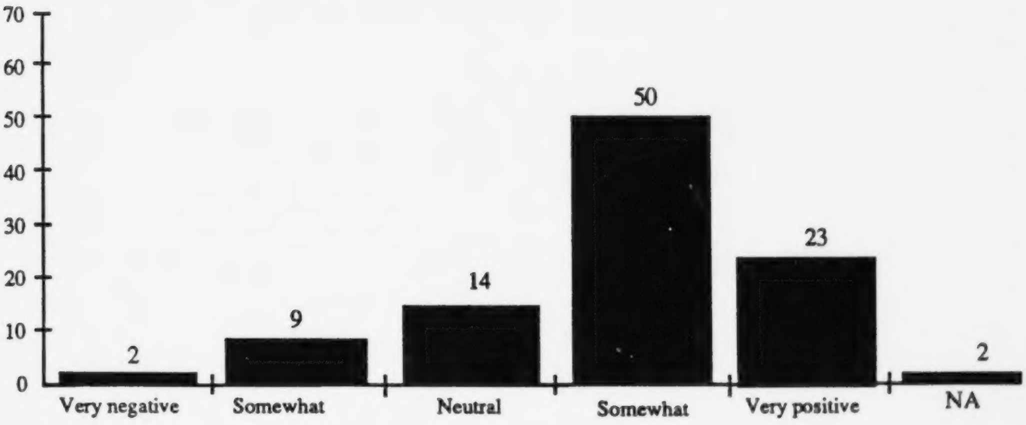

Figure 15. Perceived Effect of Strategic Planning

some kind of framework whereby schools can consider Strategic Planning as an alternative in terms of their longer term planning." One of the parent respondents believed, "Starting at a high school is a good idea. There might be real benefits for other schools—particularly at the junior high level. Many of the same issues are present as it is a transition stage." Another stated, "This could be used at a junior high school. When I talk to other administrators, they don't care what happens at other levels. There's got to be continuity between elementary, junior and senior high schools." A parent emphasized the sharing of learning, "If we can draw on each other's learning, it would make us that much more effective."

Others expressed commitment and wanted to see what was going to happen. A student stated, "I want to know what will happen to it (plan). I would like to see the whole thing through—to see what happen to it." And a parent determined, "Next year we will see what is happening."

Another respondent wondered how the plan would work in juxtaposition with a change that had occurred after the planning session, "I'm really questioning how it will be implemented—how it will really work. Because the final product was handled with the issue of declining numbers and staff, I'm wondering how that will work because we strayed off the process again." A teacher respondent felt, "The formal structure helps. We will look further ahead." Possibilities for student leadership were addressed by a student,

> Student Council want to do a strategic plan. Some administrators might not be comfortable with that concept. It is a problem because students change over is so rapid. Strategic planning was one of the issues we went around and talked to the students about. I hope it (strategic planning) goes through for next year's student council.

Summary

The school component of the case study described the high school and presented the extensive data collected from the interviews of 20 members of the school strategic planning team. The data were presented in the same two themes as emerged for Alberta

Education and the School District; The Nature of the Organization, and Planning for Change in the Organization. The results for specific questions from the school staff questionnaire, administered to the entire school staff, were integrated into the relevant topic areas within the two themes as well.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the three components of the case study were presented. Each component provided background information on the organization. The two themes that emerged from the data of each organization were the nature of the organization and planning for change in the organization. The nature of each organization was described through three factors: the environment external to the organization, the role of the organization, and the internal climate of the organization. Planning for change in each of the organizations was described through three factors as well: beliefs about planning, attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology.

The case study indicated that the factors in the nature of the each organization either influenced one another or influenced the factors of planning for change. Conversely, the factors of planning change also either influenced one another or the nature of the organization. The detailed analyses and interpretation of the case study is presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE CASE STUDY

Introduction

In this chapter, the data presented for each component of the case study in Chapter Four are summarized, analyzed and interpreted in consideration of the primary and secondary research questions and the conceptual framework for the study. As the major data sources for the study were the interviews, it is important to clarify how these data were used in the analysis and interpretation. Perhaps an artistic analogy is helpful in providing that clarification. Figuratively speaking, the author assumed that each respondent lightly sketched a personal image of particular aspects of the organization. Any agreement or replication of the image increased the clarity of each sketch. The various images were combined to develop two lightly sketched "scenes" of the organization. The scenes were combined to create a collage of each organization. Although each scene would be different if the images were sketched by different individuals, and more precise if more people had sketched the same images, it communicates information to the viewer about the organization at a certain point in time. Hence, by viewing each collage, the viewer knows more about the organizations than without the images sketched and the scenes created.

The data presented in the provincial "collage" of the case study were based on the "images" of six individuals in Alberta Education, the documents reviewed, and meeting observations. There was no attempt to assume that the views of the six respondents in the study were representative of the organization or of any particular branch or division of the organization. The data collected from documents and meeting observations supported the interview data in some areas and provided different perspectives in others. The document and observation data were relevant, particularly, to the beliefs about planning, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the specific planning methodology.

The data presented in the school district component of the case study were based solely on the interviews of six individuals who were selected fromthe stakeholder groups included in the district's original strategic planning team. There was no attempt to assume the views presented were indicative of the stakeholder group being represented, nor representative of the communities within the district. However, the collective "images" of the respondents were used to sketch scenes of the nature of the district and the planning for change that occurred in order to create a collage of the district. As there appeared to be more agreement in the district data than the provincial data, the district collage was considered to be more discernible than the provincial one.

The data presented in the school component of the case study were based on the interviews with 20 members of the school-based strategic planning project and the results of the questionnaire administered to the school staff. As with the other two organizations in the case study, there was no attempt to assume that the "images" sketched were representative of the stakeholder group, nor that, collectively, they were representative of the entire school community. But, as there was more agreement and replication in the data, the school "collage" had more clarity than either the district or provincial ones. It is recognized, however, that although perceptions and references appeared to be similar, they likely would not result in identical sketches.

Each component of the case study was developed through two themes, The Nature of the Organization, and Planning for Change in the Organization. The Nature of the Organization theme was presented through three factors: the external environment, the role, and the internal climate of the organization. The Planning for Change theme was presented through three factors as well: the beliefs about planning, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology. As the organization and analysis of data occurred, a question emerged that had not been articulated in the design of the study and which needed to preface the major research question. This question was, "What factors influence the involvement of stakeholders in planning for change in educational organizations?'

The analysis and interpretation of the case study were completed in light of the emergent question as well as the original research question which asked, What significance does stakeholder involvement have for the organization, the individuals involved, and the planning methodology used? The subsidiary questions about the effectiveness of the planning methodology and the planning sessions were considered also.

Alberta Education

The Nature of the Organization

Analysis

Alberta Education was perceived to be an organization set in a political external environment. The main influences on that environment were felt to be: (1) the prosperity initiatives of the federal government, (2) separate economic and social provincial government policies, and (3) the annual establishment of education funding which, in some years, was based on established government priorities.

Alberta Education was perceived to have three different roles. These were identified as: (a) a political role of keeping education on the provincial agenda in order to assure maximum funding and model government planning that linked policy and finance, (b) a change-agent role of "holding" the vision for education in Alberta and forcing a change in the educational value system, and (c) a policy-maker role whereby provincial expectations, policies, and accountability measures were to be established and stakeholders empowered to fulfill their respective responsibilities.

The internal climate was presented as having three characteristics. These were (a) top-down decision-making, (b) an unclear sense of purpose, and (d) a results-based focus that was perceived to be breaking new ground in education in Alberta.

Interpretation

In studying the data, it became apparent that when certain changes occurred in the external environment of Alberta Education, a particular role for the organization took precedence. This role appeared to create a corresponding change in the beliefs about planning, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology or strategy used. The broad general goals of the leader seemed to be the main constant element. At the time of data collection, factors in the external environment such as (a) the initiatives of the federal government, (b) separate provincial economic and social policies, and (c) annual education funding, appeared to cause the political role of Alberta Education to take prominence over the other roles identified. If the province was attempting to access maximum funding available for education from the federal government, and if Alberta Education was to secure maximum funding from the provincial government for education, then, politically, Alberta Education's goals and priorities needed to support the government's priorities which in turn would be expected to support the national initiatives.

Further, if the priority for Alberta Education was to obtain maximum funding for education from the province, then the key stakeholders would be those who influenced provincial financial decisions. Those stakeholders who benefited from the funding could be expected to establish similar priorities and plans in their organizations and to implement the provincial policies and programs required to obtain funding from the higher government authority. The importance of the "understanding and buy-in" of educational stakeholders in the field for such policies and program decisions would pale in comparison to the importance of whether provincial funding for education was obtained or not.

The diminishing resources for education and the increasing need to focus on a political role for the organization, logically, would have an efect on the internal climate of the organization. A climate perceived to be top-down in nature, lacking in a sense of direction, and lacking in a single approach to planning, appeared to be the result of the dominant political role.

Planning for Change in the Organization

Analysis

There were several individual beliefs about planning for change in Alberta Education. Presented collectively, they were: (a) the direction emanated from a leader with definite goals, (b) the important decisions were made by senior Education Officials, (c) advantage had to be taken of the political opportunities to advance new values and achieve goals, (d) a mechanism was needed to discuss values and solve problems, and (e) the responsibility for planning was that of the Planning Division.

Although there was no mention of a formalized plan, the document review revealed that a formal written strategic plan was developed by the Planning Division of Alberta Education in 1988 and distributed to the educational community (Alberta Education, 1988). In September 1991, Alberta Education released the *Vision for the Nineties, a Plan of Action.*

The attitudes toward stakeholder involvement were: (a) participation takes time which is no longer available, (b) there are many ways to involve stakeholders, (c) there would be stakeholder dissatisfaction no matter how much the many interest groups were involved, and (d) the use of focus groups might have some potential. The key stakeholders were identified as:

1. Education caucus and cabinet
2. Deans of the Faculties of Education
3. Alberta School Boards Association
4. Alberta Teachers' Association
5. College of Alberta School Superintendents
6. School jurisdictions
7. Directors and associate directors within Alberta Education.

The observational data revealed that approximately one half of the medium or short-term planning decisions made by Education officials over the course of three executive meetings involved external and internal stakeholders and one third involved internal stakeholders only. External stakeholders appeared to be involved mainly in two ways: consultation, and developmental project work. The majority of the consultations were deemed to be proactive involvement and the others reactive.

Document information illustrated that the trend in planning initiatives was away from the top-down approach used from 1985 to 1990, to more of a combined top-down and collaborative approach. Since 1990, the planning approach was represented as collaborative and often-times initiated by a stakeholder group (Zatko, p.35).

The planning methodology was presented as consisting of three stages. The initial stage was one of issue identification conducted by the Planning Division. The second was the appointment of a Task Team and the formulation of budget priorities. The third stage was the divisional priorization and budget development based on the *Vision* and the *Report Card.*

A number of challenges, strengths, and weaknesses of the planning process were collectively identified. The challenges were perceived to be:

1. A change of Ministers
2. The organizational resistance
3. The segregation of planning when a separate planning unit is established
4. The introduction of different aspects of strategic planning each year
5. A process that was not an orderly approach.

The strengths of the planning methodology were presented as:

1. The Vision document
2. The formal process for budget development
3. The divisional planning model in place
4. The communication plans for initiatives
5. The improvement in the process.

Weaknesses in the planning methodology were identified as:

1. The lack of a single planning mechanism
2. The reactive mode
3. No long term planning
4. A process that was not collaborative
5. The annual planning sessions.

The planning documents substantiated the lack of a single planning mechanism but illustrated an attempt at proactive, long-term planning. Although some of the documents suggested stakeholder responses to the four year plan were invited, and there were to be ongoing discussion with all partners about the *Vision* and Action Plan statement, others supported the respondent perceptions that the development of the *Vision* was not collaborative in nature.

Interpretation

Although the desire for a mechanism to discuss values and solve problems surfaced in one respondent's belief about planning, the other views on planning were closely related to the political (financial) element identified as factors in the external environment. The lack of importance of stakeholder involvement, indicated in the data on beliefs about planning and the attitudes about stakeholder involvement, became more comprehensible when it became evident that those opinions and attitudes were determined by environmental and role factors. As different roles for the organization were identified in the data, and key stakeholders were referenced, the relationship between the roles and the stakeholders became significant. It became apparent that the critical stakeholders for Alberta Education were of two types: those who influenced, or those who were influenced by, the organization.

When the political role predominated, the Cabinet members, whose own roles and departments would be affected by decisions about the funding level for education, became the significant stakeholders. When the policy-maker role took precedence, the internal and external advisors involved in the development of regulations, policies, procedures, and programs became the key stakeholders. As the change-agent role surfaced, those stakeholders who influenced the field and those who were implementers in the field, became more significant again.

Stakeholder representation was not identified as a significant element of Alberta Education's planning methodology. No challenges directly related to stakeholders were identified and of the challenges perceived in the planning process, the only one that might have related to stakeholders was organizational resistance. It is reasonable to infer from the data that at least some of the organizational resistance to new planning strategies might have resulted from internal stakeholders lack of awareness of (a) the leader's goals, (b) the influence of the external political environment on the role and the planning, (c) the attempts by the Planning Division to link the short term "political" planning to the longer-term "change-agent" planning and the operational "policy-maker" planning. There were no strengths identified that related to stakeholder involvement. The one weakness identified relevant to stakeholder involvement, that the planning process was not collaborative, indicated a lack of involvement of internal and external stakeholders.

The School District

The Nature of the Organization

Analysis

The nature of the school district was presented through the same three factors; the external environment, the role of the school district, and the climate within the district.

Three external environmental elements were perceived to affect the district. These were: (a) the planning decisions and documents put forward by Alberta Education, namely the *Vision,* (b) the rapid changes occurring in education, and (c) the community awareness of some of the challenges and shortcomings of the educational system.

The roles of the district were identified as three functions that should be carried out by the Board. The functions consisted of: (a) setting the directions and the policies for the district, (b) managing the finances of the district, and (c) being accountable to the community.

Three aspects of the internal climate of the district also were identified. These were that the district was (a) a progressive school system, (b) a place where there was belief in the abilities of the people, and (c) a place where there was cautious support for school-based decision-making.

Interpretation

Although the factors in the nature of the school district appeared to influence planning for change to some degree, they did not appear to have dictated the way the planning was viewed or handled in the organization. The data reflected a reciprocal relationship between the two areas. The specific factors of external environment, role, and internal climate seemed to influence the beliefs about planning, the attitudes about stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology. Conversely, the beliefs, attitudes and planning methodology appeared to influence the climate, the roles, and the environment external to the district.

More specifically, the elements identified in the internal climate, (a) progressiveness, (b) a faith in the abilities of people, and (c) cautious support for school-based decision-making, appeared to influence the belief that planning is creating an appropriate environment for input, the attitude that external stakeholder provide valuable perspectives, and the selection of the strategic planning methodology as a vehicle for the community to assist education. Conversely, that same belief, attitude, and reaction to strategic planning appeared to influence and reinforce the three elements within the internal climate: progressiveness, faith in people, and school-based decision-making. There was no indication that the factors in the nature of the organization influenced one another to any degree.

Planning for Change in Organization

Analysis

Planning was believed to be (a) creating an appropriate environment for input, and (b) the one process that should establish district objectives, drive annual operational planning, budget development and staff development activities. The Board of Education was identified as the body responsible for planning, and administration was perceived to be responsible for implementation of the plan.

Generally, a positive view toward external stakeholders being involved in planning for change was presented. The reasons cited for such involvement were: (a) the credibility gained in the community, (b) the value of different perspectives, (c) the increased awareness of both the internal and external stakeholders, and (d) the community confidence that resulted. The benefits derived from stakeholder involvement were perceived to be (a) the communication with respect to how the dollars were spent at the school level, (b) an understanding of how the plan changed over time, and (c) an understanding of what the stakeholders wanted from the school system.

Eight elements of the planning methodology were addressed. These consisted of the personal reactions to the process, the challenges, the strengths, the weaknesses or shortcomings, stakeholder representation, the opportunity to contribute, the critical issues, and the usefulness of the plan.

The personal reactions to the process were:

1. Senior administrative excitement
2. Parental interest in the process and people involved
3. Support from industry for having a planning process
4. School administrator skepticism.

The challenges were identified as:

1. The need to react quickly to change
2. Communication with parents and their understanding of the plan
3. The commitment of staff
4. The use of the planning process to drive the annual budget
5. The on-going involvement of new people
6. The action plan development.

The strengths were perceived to be:

1. The equal treatment of a variety of people involved
2. The ownership of participants
3. Having a vision of the system in the future
4. Having a vehicle that enabled the community to assist education.

The shortcomings were identified as:

1. Communication with teachers and Alberta Education to assure appropriate interface with provincial priorities

2. Time with respect to the timing of the political election, time enough for the planning process, and the increased work time resulting from the addition instead of replacement of a planning process.

Stakeholder representation ranged from very positive to satisfaction accompanied by a desire for more student representation and business and industry participation. The opportunity to contribute to the process during the planning sessions was viewed as effective by approximately half the respondents. The identification of the critical issues was felt to be positive also by half the respondents while a third were not so sure. The plan developed was viewed as useful due to :

1. The positive effect on the school system and the community
2. The resulting decisions made
3. The need for increased use and awareness of the plan
4. The potential for school-based planning.

Interpretation

The factors integral to the Planning for Change theme in the district—the beliefs about planning, the attitudes about stakeholder involvement, and the reactions to the planning methodology—appeared to influence one another and the nature of the organization. The belief that planning was creating an appropriate environment for input seemed to have influenced the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement and the selection of a planning methodology that included a variety of stakeholders.

Conversely, the specific reactions to the methodology : (a) different perspectives were valuable to the district, (b) internal and external stakeholders had increased awareness about the district, and (c) stakeholder involvement increased community confidence in the district, served to reinforce the attitudes about stakeholder involvement in the planning. This, in turn, strengthened the faith in the abilities of people in the community.

The data on the planning methodology identified a number of elements that appeared to be influenced by the involvement of stakeholders. The interest and support of the parent and business representatives in the district seemed to directly result from their involvement in the planning process. One of the challenges, related to stakeholder involvement, was the desire for the on-going involvement of new people in the planning process. The strength that appeared to reflect the influence of other stakeholders was the feeling of equality of the people involved. The only shortcoming identified that involved stakeholders was participants' desire for more representation by students, business and industry.

The School

The Nature of the Organization

Analysis

The elements in the external environment felt to have influenced the school were three-fold: societal, provincial and local. Two societal expectations perceived to affect the environment were that (a) schools were to perform family functions, and (b) achievement was to be comparable to other cultures. Alberta Education's influence was felt in three areas: (a) the top-down approach, (b) the emphases on university entrance programs, (c) the questionable leadership directions. The school was also perceived to be influenced by the support of the district in three areas: (a) district planning, (b) the level of involvement and input, and (c) school autonomy.

The role of the school also was presented through three functions. Providing the basics was felt to be the most important function. Being accountable to the community was felt to be significant as well. The broadening of students' experiences was not perceived to be as significant as the other two functions.

The internal climate was perceived to be characterized by (a) the style of the leader, (b) teacher responsibility for program delivery, and by what the researcher has chosen to designate as (c) "concerns about change." These concerns included:

1. The difficult nature of change
2. The readiness of teachers
3. The inhibiting factors in the school
4. The structural barriers
5. The changing nature of students
6. School partnerships.

Interpretation

The factors within the nature of the organization were felt to have had less influence on planning for change in the school than at either the district or provincial level. However, the factors in planning for change may have had a significant effect on the nature of the school. It was difficult to determine whether the concerns about change, identified in the internal climate, resulted from the planning experience. It was possible that the planning experience exacerbated the perception that change was difficult. It was unclear whether the role of the school as being accountable to the community emerged as a result of the planning experience and the involvement of stakeholders from the community in that experience. Elements identified in the environment external to the school such as (a) district support for planning, (b) level of participation and input, and (c) support for school-based decision-making, also could have been influenced by the strategic planning experience but the data did not provide this clarification.

Planning for Change in the Organization

Analysis

The beliefs about planning presented the collective perspective that (a) long-term planning was new to schools, (b) administration was taking advantage of an opportunity to further change, and (c) it was a way to use public input and be accountable. Planning was perceived to be necessary in order to:

1. Prepare for change
2. Ensure changes were appropriate for the school
3. Address emerging problems
4. Further integrate the home, school, and community
5. Revitalize the staff.

The majority of the respondents who addressed the topic felt the main responsibility for planning should rest with the principal. However, on the school staff questionnaire, the largest percentage (36%) of the school staff felt the decision about how planning was done should rest, collaboratively, with the principal, staff, student council and parent advisory council.

The attitudes toward stakeholder involvement were viewed as positive and included such reasons for involvement as (a) demystifying school for parents, (b) opportunities for a leadership role for business, and (c) the value of input from people outside the school. The stakeholders were identified as:

1. Students
2. Parents
3. Community
4. People inside the system
5. Teachers
6. Business community
7. Central Office.

Collectively, positive support was given for stakeholder representation from students, trustees, parents, business and industry, central office and school staff.

The response to the strategic planning methodology presented the nine elements: personal reactions, challenges, shortcomings, strengths, identification of critical issues, quality of the plan, facilitation, the effect of the researcher observe, and the potential for change. The personal reactions were:

1. Experiencing a personal change
2. A positive reaction
3. Anxiety.

The challenges were identified as:

1. Synthesizing the information
2. Coming to consensus
3. Differentiating between strategies and objectives
4. Time constraints
5. Lack of control
6. Level of interaction
7. Educational terminology
8. Communication of process and results
9. The necessary follow-up.

The shortcomings of the methodology included:

1. Communication difficulties
2. Lack of personal preparation
3. Time constraints
4. Lack of representation
5. Facilitation
6. Lack of literature base
7. The initiative as being top-down.

The strengths presented were:

1. The structure and discipline of the process
2. The leadership initiative
3. The involvement of others
4. The level of interaction
5. The personal growth
6. The support of staff
7. The location.

The majority of respondents were unsure about whether the critical issues had been addressed while several were positive and a few were negative about this aspect. The majority felt the district plan had some effect on the school planning project, and a few felt there was little effect or they were unsure. The quality of the plan was perceived to be favourable with about half the group making additional suggestions for improvement. The facilitation was viewed as:

1. Positive
2. An advantage to an insider
3. An advantage to an outsider
4. The advantage of both
5. No negative perceptions.

The presence of the researcher was perceived as:

1. To have no effect
2. Not intrusive
3. Having an initial effect

The potential for change occurring as a result of the project was identified as:

1. The project as an example for other schools
2. The need for more student involvement
3. The expectations for new staff
4. The need to wait and see about the future commitment to the project.

Interpretation

The beliefs about planning—long-term planning was new, taking advantage of an opportunity to further change, use of public input and being accountable—reflected the influence of the recent planning experience. Of particular significance was the finding that the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement and the responses to the strategic planning experience were altered, dramatically in some cases, by the strategic planning experience. The positive attitudes about stakeholder involvement in planning and the reasons for involvement appeared to be a direct result of respondent participation in the strategic planning project. The identification of students, parents, education and local community, and teachers as stakeholders; and the desire for additional representation by students and business were interpreted, by the researcher, to be a strong indication of the value participants attributed to stakeholder input during the planning experience.

None of the challenges identified were directly related to the involvement of stakeholders in the process, but such elements as coming to consensus, lack of control, level of interaction, and educational terminology, could very likely have been influenced by stakeholder participation in the process. A lack of representation, which in fact supported the involvement of stakeholders, also was presented as a shortcoming. There may have been some connection between the feeling of lack of preparation identified as a shortcoming, and stakeholder involvement.

The strengths of (a) the involvement of others, (b) the level of interaction, and (c) the personal growth, were attributed to the planning experience and the involvement with stakeholders. The other aspect of the planning methodology that was felt to be influenced by stakeholder involvement was the potential for change element whereby the need for more student involvement and teamwork in decision-making was viewed as a possibility for the future.

Although it was unclear in the data, the positive reactions to the planning methodology may have influenced such beliefs about planning as (a) administrators taking advantage of opportunity for change, and (b) planning as a necessity for change. The belief that planning is a way to use public input and be accountable, and that planning further integrates the home, school, and community also might have resulted from of the positive experience with stakeholder representatives.

Chapter Summary

To return to the artistic analogy, each of the three components of the case study was presented as a collage of the organization. Each collage was developed by grouping two scenes, the nature of the organization, and planning for change in the organization. The first scene in each collage was created by sketches of the external environment, the roles, and the internal climate. The second scene included sketches of the beliefs about planning, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology. The images within the school collage had more clarity than either those of the school district or Alberta Education. An interpretation of the two scenes in each of the collages in the case study was presented also. The findings and conclusions of the study are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter contains a summary of the design of the study, the study findings and conclusions. The implications of these conclusions for the practitioner have been identified and suggestions for further study have been included.

Summary

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to inquire into the strategic planning of one high school and the provincial and district planning context in which the school's planning occurred. The major research question to guide the exploratory case study asked, What significance does stakeholder involvement in planning have for the organization, the individuals involved, and the planning methodology?

Significance of the Study

The study was considered significant for a number of reasons. First, there was a theoretical need to explore the use of the process called Strategic Planning at different levels of educational planning. Second, there was a practical need to describe and evaluate structures that may effectively engage student, staff, parent, and community stakeholders in collaborative reflection and examination of the appropriateness and relevancy of the institution and its delivery system. Third, it was considered important to obtain information about planning and self-management, oftentimes called school-based management, at the school level, and the context in which this occurs. Fourth, information about stakeholder perceptions of involvement and acceptance of planning for change at the district and provincial levels was considered appropriate.

The Methodology

The methodology was that of a case study, developed in three component parts. One educational organization was selected to represent each of three levels of planning responsibility for education in Alberta: the provincial department of education, the local school district, and the school.

The Case Study

The provincial department was selected to provide the provincial context for planning occurring at the district and school level. The school district was involved in strategic planning and provided the context at the local level. The extension of the district strategic planning into the high school made that school and its planning initiative a major focus of the study.

The provincial component of the case study was developed from interview, observation, and document review data; the district component from interview data; and the school component from interview, observation, questionnaire, and document review data.

Analysis and Interpretation

As the presentation of the case study occurred, data emerged on a question that had not been articulated in the original design of the study. This question was, "What factors influenced the involvement of stakeholders in planning for change in the educational organizations?" The analysis and interpretation of each of the three component parts of the case study has been completed in light of this emergent question and the original major research question, "What is the significance of stakeholder involvement in educational planning for the organization, the individuals, and the planning methodology?"

Findings and Conclusions

Question #1: Key Factors Influencing the Involvement of Stakeholders in Planning

Alberta Education

Factor One: The Role of the Organization

In Alberta Education, the most significant finding was that the factors identified in the nature of the organization—the external environment, role, and internal climate—appeared to strongly influence one another as well as influencing, to the point of directing, the factors inherent in planning for change in the organization, especially that of stakeholder involvement. The elements within the external environment appeared to significantly influence which role emerged as the predominant role for the organization at a particular point in time. Similarly, the predominant role appeared to have a major influence on who were identified as important stakeholders at that time. When the political role for the department was predominant, the "focal" educational organizations that had viewed themselves as "constant" stakeholders, did not appear to be as involved in long-term planning for change as they had been when the change-agent or policy-maker roles were more prominent (Mitroff, 1983, p. 34). In short, the first key factor in influencing stakeholder involvement in Alberta Education's planning appeared to be the predominant role of the organization at the time.

In relating this finding to relevant literature, Tichy's model of cycles of organizational change bears resemblance to the roles identified for Alberta Education, and some relationship to the stakeholders perceived significant for the organization during a particular role. When financial decisions are made during the predominance of the political role, or to use Tichy's model, when the political cycle peaks, the need for legislation and regulations resulting from those political decisions would likely cause the policy-maker role of Alberta Education to become more significant. The policy-maker role would be similar to Tichy's technical cycle which, logically, would peak during the time of intense work on legislation, regulations, and policies.

When the implementation of new regulations and policies was required of "focal organization" stakeholders in the field, the change-agent role or the "cultural cycle" would begin to rise in prominence and Alberta Education would engage in the preparation of informational documents; special meetings with focal stakeholder organizations; presentations to school districts and school advisory councils; inservice activities for superintendents, trustees, and principals, etc. Although each of the three cycles of organizational change in Tichy's model was illustrated over a time-frame of approximately ten years, the increasing rapidity of change in society in general and in educational organizations more specifically, would seem to support the thesis that the cycles could occur in a much tighter timeframe in the 1990's; perhaps even as short as one to two year cycles, or periods of role domination, for Alberta Education.

Mitroff's findings on stakeholder identification also may have some application to the relationship between organization role or cycle and stakeholder identification. The researcher submits that when the political role for Alberta Education dominates, the "positional and opinion-leadership approach" to stakeholder identification occurs, as evidenced by who tops the list of stakeholders identified in Chapter Five (Mitroff, p. 34). As the other two perceived roles of policy-maker and change-agent gain prominence from time to time, it is likely that other approaches such as "imperative, reputational, social-participation, or demographic" would be used to identify the stakeholders critical to the success of the department's planning strategy being used (p. 34).

The connections between (a) the finding of role predominance, (b) Tichy's model of organizational change cycles, and (c) Mitroff's theory of stakeholder identification as it relates to organizational role, have been identified. These connections are illustrated in Figure 16.

Role	Organizational Cycle	Stakeholder Identification
Political	Political	Positional Opinion-leadership
Policy-maker	Technical	Imperative Reputational
Change-agent	Cultural	Social-participation Demographic

Figure 16 Connections in Role, Organizational Cycle, and Stakeholders

Factor Two: The Planning Strategy

The planning for change factors were influenced significantly by the environment external to Alberta Education and by the predominant role. The planning factors (the beliefs about planning, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement, and the planning methodology) also appeared to directly influence one another. Specifically, given the political role of Alberta Education in obtaining maximum funding for education in Alberta, and the importance of the positional stakeholders of Education Caucus and Cabinet, the attitudes about Caucus and Cabinet appeared to determine what the major planning methodology or strategy would be. In a time of political role dominance, it was a financial planning strategy. This strategy then appeared to direct the manner in which the key identified stakeholders, Cabinet and Caucus, were to be involved or, perhaps more accurately described, the manner in which they were to be influenced. In other words, the beliefs and attitudes about the stakeholders determined the planning strategy to be used. The strategy, in turn, affected how the identified stakeholders were to be involved or influenced. Hence, the second key factor influencing stakeholder involvement in Alberta Education's planning appeared to be the planning strategy.

Mitroff's work on the properties of stakeholders, again, became relevant upon consideration of how "a change in strategy for an organization changes one or more of the relationships among the stakeholders" (p. 37). Given the legislative authority of Alberta

Education, the researcher surmises that a change in the provincial department's planning strategies did indeed change the relationships among stakeholders, the assumptions about the behaviors of stakeholders, and the network that bound them to Alberta Education (Mitroff, p. 38).

Gluck, Kaufman, and Walleck (1991), in their study on "Strategic Management for Competitive Advantage," indicated "that formal strategic planning does indeed evolve along similar lines in different companies, albeit at varying rates of progress." They segmented the progression of planning into four sequential stages: (1) basic financial planning, (2) forecast-based planning, (3) externally-oriented planning, and (4) strategic management. (Gluck, et al., p. 2). Although Alberta Education appeared to exhibit planning characteristics of the first three stages of Gluck et al.'s progression, it seemed most consistent with "basic financial planning" whereby "Procedures develop to forecast revenue, costs, and capital needs and to identify the limits for expense budgets on a annual basis. Companies . . . often display powerful business strategies but they are rarely formalized. Instead, they exist" (p. 4).

The School District

Factor One: The Planning Methodology

The factors within the nature of the organization appeared to influence the factors of planning for change but did not direct them as was the case at the provincial level. Instead, there seemed to be a reciprocal relationship whereby the two factor groups influenced one another: those of the nature of the organization (the external environment of the district, the roles of the Board of Education, the internal climate of the district) and those of planning for change (the beliefs about planning and the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement). Hence, there were several interactive factors that influenced the involvement of stakeholders in planning for change. However, one factor, the planning methodology, appeared to be more influential than the others.

The most important role identified for the Board of Education was to set directions and policies for the district. At the same time, the internal climate characterized, in part, by faith in the abilities of people, appeared to directly influence (a) the belief of administration that "planning is creating an appropriate environment for input," (b) the attitudes that there was value to having different perspectives and (c) the increase in community confidence. The role of the Board in setting directions for the system, and those beliefs and attitudes, in turn, influenced the selection of a planning methodology that was a "vehicle for the community to assist education." Hence, the key factor influencing the involvement of stakeholders in the planning at the district level was the selection of a strategic planning methodology characterized by the involvement of stakeholders in the organization and external stakeholders from the community. The secondary factors influencing the choice of planning methodology were the role, the internal climate, the beliefs about planning, and the attitudes about stakeholders.

In applying Mitroff's approach of stakeholder identification to the data on representation of district stakeholders, it became evident that a combination of "positional, imperative, reputational and social-participation" stakeholders was used for the district strategic planning (p. 37). In relating the predominant role of the Board—setting directions and policies—and the key factor influencing stakeholder involvement—the selection of a strategic planning methodology—to Tichy's organizational change cycles, it would appear that both the political cycle (role) and the technical cycle (planning strategy) were rising at the same time. The responsibility for allocating diminishing resources and deciding on "the goals of the organization" seemed to cause the peaking of the political cycle wherein "information required to complete the task" of setting the direction for the system, was causing the peaking of the technical cycle (Tichy, p. 167).

The School

Factor One: The Planning Methodology

The factors present in the nature of the school appeared to influence the factors in planning for change although to a lesser degree than at the provincial and district levels. The school administration's beliefs about why planning was necessary influenced the external environment elements: Alberta Education, the district's support for planning, and the prominent role of "providing the basics"; and the internal climate characterized by "concerns about change." These beliefs resulted in the selection of the strategic planning methodology which, in turn, influenced the involvement of stakeholders in planning for change in the school. The key factor, then, to influence stakeholder involvement was the methodology, as it was for the district. Other factors appeared to be the external environment, the role, the internal climate, and the beliefs about planning.

By applying Mitroff's approaches of stakeholder identification to the school data on stakeholder identification, it would seem that a combination of "reputational" and "social-participation" stakeholders had been used (p. 37). If Tichy's model of organizational change cycles is applied to the school, the importance of the role of providing the basics and the need to be accountable for that responsibility to the community appeared to have created the need for new information on what the basics are and how to be accountable to the public. This need likely would have triggered the peaking of the technical cycle. Additionally, the "concerns about change" or perhaps as Tichy describes them, "inconsistencies in the cultural values or changes in people/ ideologies" also suggested a rising in the cultural cycle at the same time. With two organizational change cycles peaking at the same time, the public perception of dissatisfaction with today's schools and the internal pressures and strain being experienced by school staff, become more comprehensible.

Question #2: The Significance of Stakeholder Involvement on the Organization, the Individuals, and the Planning Methodology

Alberta Education

Stakeholder involvement was not identified as a significant aspect of Alberta Education's planning strategy. If, as concluded earlier, the political role dictated "positional" stakeholders, then it stands to reason that representation would be a non-issue. However, even though the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement appeared to focus on reasons why involvement was not part of the planning processes of Alberta Education, it is significant that representatives from "focal" educational organizations were involved in operational planning decisions. Although the involvement of these stakeholders, as a planning tool, appeared to be considered an aspect of long-range planning and perceived to be no longer useful, in reality, the stakeholders of focal organizations were included in much of the day-to-day operational planning and decision-making.

Perhaps what had occurred was that focal organizations had become an integral part of the organization, and were perceived internally as essential players in accomplishing tasks more related to the less dominant roles of the organization at the time, the policy-maker and the change agent roles. During the peaking of the political cycle or role, they were not considered "positional" stakeholders, thereby not considered significant in the financial planning strategy.

The District

Stakeholder involvement in the district planning had significance for the individual participants in that it appeared to cause them to perceive the organization in a positive way. It also served to reinforce the positive attitudes of participants about the value of different perspectives in planning and a methodology that enabled community assistance. As well, the involvement of stakeholders had significant positive influence on the responses to a planning methodology that not only included stakeholders but sought additional representation from the community. Responses such as the interest and support of parents and business; the challenge of expanded involvement of representatives from students, business, and community; the strengths of feelings of equality and ownership in the plan, were all elements of the strategic planning methodology that had been influenced by stakeholder participation.

The School

At the school level, the factors in planning had a strong influence on one another. The beliefs of the planning team members about planning were directly affected by the planning experience and the involvement of stakeholders. As well, the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement and the reactions to strategic planning were positively affected by the planning experience and in some cases, dramatically changed from negative to positive. The responses of participants in terms of their personal reactions; the challenges, strengths, and shortcomings they identified, were strongly influenced by the strategic planning methodology and stakeholder representation in the planning experience. However, any effects of the strategic planning experience on the internal climate of the school, the roles of the school, and the external environment, were not obvious.

Similarities and Differences

The findings and conclusions of the study revealed several key similarities in planning for educational change at the provincial, district and school levels. There were also a number of significant differences in the key factors. These have been identified for Alberta Education and the school district; the district and the school; and Alberta Education, the district and the school.

Alberta Education and the School District

The study revealed three significant similarities and eight differences in the nature and planning of Alberta Education and the school district.

Similarities

1. The identification of the challenge of changing political representation, i.e. the Minister of Education, was similar to that of the shortcoming identified as the timing of the planning sessions and the political election in the district.
2. In Alberta Education, having a vision document was identified as a strength of the planning process as was having a vision of the system in the future identified as a strength for the district.
3. Within Alberta Education's beliefs about planning was the need for a mechanism to discuss values and solve problems. Having a vehicle to enable the community to assist education was identified as a strength for the district.

Differences

1. Alberta Education was felt to be accountable for the student achievement results in the province whereas the district was perceived to be accountable to the community.
2. The internal climate of Alberta Education was perceived to be centralized, top-down decision-making whereas the district climate was perceived to be characterized by a faith in people's abilities and a moving toward decentralized decision-making.
3. In Alberta Education, the identification and use of stakeholders changed according to the dominant role and the planning strategy used whereas in the district, stakeholder involvement was perceived to be characteristic of the way things were done and an integral component of the planning methodology in place.
4. Alberta Education's plan for change, during the predominance of the political role, was perceived to be a financial plan. The district plan for change was perceived to be the vision of the system in the future and a vehicle that enabled the community to assist education.
5. It appeared significant for the district that the community was aware of the challenges it faced in education whereas a similar concern about district awareness of the challenges faced by the province was not identified.

6. There were no strengths identified with respect to stakeholder involvement in Alberta Education's planning whereas value of different perspectives and the feeling of equality and ownership of the plan were identified as strengths in the district process.
7. For Alberta Education, a weakness identified in the planning process was that it was not collaborative. In the district, the lack of sufficient representation by students, business, and industry, was felt to be a weakness.
8. Having a communication plan for each initiative was considered a strength in Alberta Education whereas communication was identified as both a challenge and a shortcoming in the district planning.

The District and the School

A comparison of the findings for the district and the school revealed there were more similarities than differences between nature and planning of the two organizations.

Similarities

1. Both the school and the district identified Alberta Education as an influencing element in their external environment.
2. Both the school and the district identified accountability to the community as one of the roles of the organization.
3. The element of teacher responsibility for program delivery in the school's internal climate was similar to the district's support for school-based decision-making and the belief in the abilities of people.
4. Both the district and the school identified the value of perspectives from stakeholders as a reason for involvement of stakeholders in the planning process.
5. The usefulness of the plan was perceived to be favorable for both the school and the district participants.

Differences

1. Aspects and concerns about change were identified in the internal climate of the school whereas progressiveness was identified in the climate of the district.
2. The majority of the participants at the school level felt unsure about whether the critical issues for the school had been identified during the planning process whereas the majority of the district participants felt positive about the issues identified.

Alberta Education, the District, and the School

There were a number of factors in the nature and planning of the three organizations that were similar for two of the organizations and different for the third. There appeared to be only one element similar for all three organizations.

1. The key role for Alberta Education was perceived to be a political one of obtaining financial resources for education in the province. The key role identified for the Board was political as well but was the setting of directions and policies for the district. For the school, the key role was technical in nature in that it was perceived to be the provision of the basics to students.
2. The belief in Alberta Education that planning was taking advantage of political opportunity to advance new values and achieve new goals was similar to the school belief that planning was administration's way of taking advantage of an opportunity for change but different from the district belief that planning was creating an appropriate environment for input.
3. Both the school and the district cited reasons for stakeholder involvement whereas Alberta Education cited reasons for not involving stakeholders.
4. The stakeholders identified at the school and district levels were the same groups, two of whom were parents and students. The stakeholders identified for Alberta Education were different groups. Students and parents were not mentioned.

5. Communication of the plan was perceived as a challenge for the both the school and the district whereas the communication of initiatives was identified as a strength for Alberta Education.
6. All three organizations identified time as a constraining factor in planning.

Implications

The study of (a) the key factors influencing the involvement of stakeholders, (b) the significance of that involvement in planning for educational change in Alberta Education, the school district, and the school, and (c) the similarities and differences in the nature and planning of the three organizations, raised a number of implications that are discussed in this section. These implications appear to relate specifically to the practice of planning and influencing educational change at the three levels and to areas where additional study could be beneficial to educational practitioners.

Implications for Practice

Factors Influencing Stakeholder Involvement

1. The first key factor influencing stakeholder involvement in Alberta Education's planning appeared to be the predominant role identified for the organization at a particular point in time.

The implication for practitioners in the field is the explicit realization that the predominance of political role for Alberta Education has changed their status as stakeholders. New strategies appear to be required if "focal" educational organizations such as the Alberta School Boards' Association, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the universities of Alberta, the Alberta Teachers' Association, and school districts in general, wish to be considered "positional" or "opinion-leadership" stakeholders in order to influence the political and financial educational decisions of the provincial government.

2. The second key factor influencing the involvement of stakeholders in planning for educational change at the provincial level was the actual planning strategy used. When the political role for Alberta Education is dominant, the stakeholders perceived to be "positional or opinion-leadership" stakeholders exert the most influence over the planning strategy to be used by Alberta Education (Mitroff, p. 34).

The first implication of this finding would be that attempts to influence the planning strategies of Alberta Education should be focused on the positional stakeholders as opposed to the Alberta Education staff.

The second implication of this finding for practitioners is the apparent need to understand that the planning strategy used by the provincial department affects the relationship between focal organization stakeholders and the department. The relationship that such organizations have experienced with Alberta Education appears to be characteristic of key stakeholders during the predominance of the policy-maker and change-agent roles in order to influence political decisions about policies and change processes and to implement those decisions effectively .

The third implication of this finding is the necessity for focal educational organizations to exhort the leaders of Alberta Education to evolve to the level of formal strategic planning in order to diminish the continued domination of the political role and positional stakeholders. A formal strategic planning methodology might bring balance, rather than control, to the planning results and assure that the quality of education is determined by sound educational criteria rather than political /financial criteria established by the provincial government agenda. Consistent, "community-based" strategic planning methodology and management to steer the direction of education in Alberta might provide a more powerful political alternative for positional stakeholders than that of the present financial planning strategies of Alberta Education.

3. The key factor influencing the involvement of stakeholders in the planning at the district level was the selection of a strategic planning methodology built on the

involvement of stakeholders within the organization and external stakeholders from the community.

The first implication for practitioners at the district level is the recognition that when the political cycle (role) is peaking, there is a need for new technical tools, such as strategic planning, to ensure that the political role is serving the purpose of the organization, the education of its students, as well as possible. If, as the study concluded, the perceived role of the Board of Education is setting the direction, the vision, and the policies for the district; and different perspectives and community support are valued by the district, a practical vehicle or tool to make this task as effective and efficient as possible is required.

The second implication is that the strategic planning methodology can be a useful vehicle to obtain different stakeholder perspectives and community support.
Tichy cautioned that more than one organizational cycle peaking at the same time puts a strain on the organization (p. 167).

The third implication for the planning methodology of districts is to ensure that when a peaking political role or cycle in the organization requires new technical tools, causing the potential peaking of the technical change cycle at the same time, it may be critical for district leaders to stabilize the cultural cycle as much as possible to avoid the possibility of three change cycles rising at the same time.

4. The key factor influencing the involvement of stakeholders in the school planning was the selection of a strategic planning methodology built on the involvement of internal and external stakeholders. The factors that influenced the selection were the environment elements of Alberta Education, the district support for planning, and the role of providing the basics. As in many other public institutions requiring role redefinition and organizational restructuring, a redefinition of what the predominant role, the provision of the basics, means for today's schools may necessary and healthy in a time of

rapid change. If so, the key stakeholders named in the data would need to be a part of that role redefinition process.

The first implication would appear to be that public school administrators would need to acquire new technical tools, such as strategic planning, to involve their stakeholders effectively. They may need to acquire, also, the technical tools to fulfill the accountability role identified in the findings as well.

A second implication is that the peaking of the technical change cycle, caused by the pressures of acquiring a number of new technical skills, likely would cause a rise in the cultural cycle of the school as additional professional development expectations, administrative upgrading, implementation of new delivery models would be required. The caution for the school district would be to stabilize the political role of the school, its rise oftentimes accompanying decentralized decision-making, to assure that the peaking of three organizational change cycles would not occur simultaneously, which as Tichy suggests, could cause the collapse of an organization (Tichy, p.169).

The Significance of Stakeholder Involvement

1. The finding that representatives of focal organizations were not considered "positional or opinion-leadership" stakeholders in Alberta Education's financial planning strategy but appeared to have become an integral part of Alberta Education and players in accomplishing tasks related to the less dominant policy-maker and the change agent roles has a major implication for "focal organizations."

The first implication suggested by this finding is that during the peaking of the political cycle or role, these organizations should no longer consider themselves as stakeholders external to the provincial education department but as integral players in the same organization with goals, policies, and structures clearly aligned with those of the "corporate" organization, Alberta Education. In this way, they would continue to warrant an integral role in defining those goals, policies, and structures that served to implement the political decisions.

A second implication is suggested in the aspect of communication. If communication and technological advances diminish distance and time within our province and country, the external stakeholders Alberta Education would appear to be the provincial government, the other provinces, the business and industry community, and the Canadian community at large. If that were the case, the implication for provincial practitioners would be to focus communication and support building strategies on those external stakeholders in order to assure continued support for public education provincially and nationally.

2. The significance of stakeholder involvement at the district was (a) the positive view participants held of the organization and a feeling of equality and ownership in the plan; (b) the reinforcement of the inclusion of stakeholders, the value of different perspectives, and the need for expanded involvement of students, business, and community; and (c) the reinforcement of the strategic planning methodology as a vehicle for community assistance.

The implication for districts is that while practitioners appear to realize the benefits accruing from involving parents and community stakeholders, and seeking different perspectives in creating a vision of the future; the parents and community identified "feelings of equality" and "ownership" as significant strengths of the planning process. There appears to be work necessary in bridging the communication and comfort level gaps between educators, parents and community if a supportive partnership is desired in the future.

3. The significance of stakeholder involvement at the school level was the strong, positive influence on participants' beliefs about planning and the attitudes toward stakeholder involvement and the strategic planning methodology.

An implication for school practitioners is that a strategic planning experience can be a significant factor in changing beliefs about planning, attitudes about stakeholder involvement in education, and responses to the concept of strategic planning itself. If, the school's role is providing the basics, and if any change in what those basics are and how they were to be delivered is required, the change process would need to begin with changing beliefs and attitudes.

Similarities and Differences

1. A comparison of the similarities and differences between the three organizations revealed there appeared to be more similarity than difference between the nature and planning of the school district and the school and more difference than similarity between the nature and planning of the provincial department and the school district. In times of economic restraint and searching for more efficient means of delivering education, perhaps the implication is that there should be more similarity and less difference in order to streamline the efficiency of Alberta's education system. On the other hand, perhaps the implication is that there should be less similarity and more difference in order to avoid duplication of effort and streamline the educational delivery system.

2. A second implication would appear to relate to the perceptions of communication of initiatives. At the provincial level, where there appeared to be no concern expressed about whether the practitioner or community were aware of the challenges faced by the department, the perception of communication of initiatives was positive. Yet in the district and the school, where an awareness of the community for the challenges faced by the district and school was perceived as significant, communication of new initiatives was perceived to be a challenge and a shortcoming. Perhaps resources devoted to the communication functions at the department level served to allay concerns in this area whereas the district and school did not appear to devote similar resources to the communication function. The implication that would follow would be that districts and schools may need to reconsider the priority and resources attached to the communication function in the future.

Implications for Theory and Research

1. The change of political leaders was identified as a shortcoming of the approach to planning used by the provincial department of education. The timing of the political election was perceived a challenge in the approach to planning employed at the school district level. As well, educational organizations were being entreated by the general public to behave more like business and become more entrepreneurial. The ultimate of this approach was purported by to Gluck et al. (1991) to be "strategic management for competitive advantage" whereby there is a "planning framework that cuts across organizational boundaries and facilitates strategic decision-making about customer groups and resources, a planning process that stimulates entrepreneurial thinking, and a corporate values system that reinforces managers' commitment to the company's strategy" (p. 9). It would appear that further study into the effect of the political election process on the ability of an organization to evolve to a level of strategic management that" links the rigor of formal planning to vigorous operational execution" is necessary (Gluck, p. 10).

2. During the peaking of the political cycle or role for Alberta Education, it appears that focal organizations need to redefine their role from one of an external stakeholder of the provincial department to one of being an integral player within the same organization with goals, policies, and priorities clearly aligned with those of the "corporate" organization, Alberta Education. Further study is required to determine whether such an alignment between Alberta Education, school districts, and schools could be indicative of the interdependence of a progressive relationship with Alberta Education from the dependency in the 1950's to 1960's, through more independency in the 1970's to 1980's to a time of interdependency in the 1990's to the year 2000, and "managers (who) set for themselves ambitious goals that if accomplished will lead to a sustainable competitive advantage of their company"? Or does it signify a return to a state of dependency?

3. Exploratory similarities and connections in the areas of organizational role dominance, Tichy's model of organizational change cycles, and Mitroff's theory of approaches to stakeholder identification were discussed in relationship to the findings and conclusions of the study. Study into the relationship observed by the researcher between the model of organizational change cycles, roles of organizations, and the stakeholders involved in those organizations is warranted.

Implications for Theory and Practice

The Preparation of School Administrators

Understanding school staff concerns about change, and the effectiveness of the strategic planning methodology in changing attitudes about planning and stakeholder involvement, have implications for the preparation of school administrators. Preservice courses for school administrators that integrate the study of the change process with practical collaborative planning skill development will be beneficial for aspiring administrators in the future. These areas tend to be addressed in isolation in many administrative training programs.

The significance of the changing roles of Alberta Education, and the identification of the perceived roles for the school district and the school, suggest areas of study that would be useful for students in administration. Coursework that develops a keen awareness of (a) the changing roles of educational organizations such as Alberta Education, school districts, and schools, (b) strategies to identify stakeholders who will be influential in decision-making, and (c) effective planning strategies or methodologies appropriate to the role and stakeholders identified will be an important aspect of site-based management.

Also, a thorough consideration of the relationships between the perceived roles of organizations, organizational change cycles , and stakeholder identification processes should preclude practical coursework on collaborative planning methodologies. School administrators in the future will need to understand how the strategic planning methodology can assist them in achieving a workable balance between the political pressures of the community and sound educational practice. The site-based management focus in this province will be an opportunity for school administrators and staff, together with students, parents, and community, to develop a shared vision and a strategic plan to guide the decision-making at their school.

Parent, student, and community stakeholder involvement in school-based strategic planning highlights the need for effective adminstrative and staff communication strategies and the use of 'plain' language that will make school activities and documents accessible to the public. Preparation in developing school communication plans and designing creative public and media relations programs will be essential as school leaders become increasingly accountable to the community for efficient planning and improved student achievement.

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Appendix A

INTERVIEW FORMAT FOR THE SCHOOL PLANNING TEAM

Opening Comments:

As you know, I'm interested in planning for change in education. A critical part of that planning occurs at the school level. Thus, I am observing the planning sessions and interviewing people involved in the development of one high school's strategic plan.

1. LEAD-IN: BEFORE WE GET STARTED WITH THE INTERVIEW, PERHAPS YOU WOULD TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED HERE? HOW LONG HAVE YOU ATTENDED OR WORKED IN THE SCHOOL OR AREA? WHAT LINE OF OCCUPATION ?

2. GET PERMISSION TO TAPE RECORD THE INTERVIEW. ASSURE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION. INFORM THAT THE INFORMATION WILL BE ANALYZED AND WRITTEN UP IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO INDIVIDUAL OPINION WILL BE IDENTIFIED.

3. DESCRIBE THE INTERVIEW FORMAT. I'M INTERESTED IN HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL PLANING PROCESS THAT YOU ARE INVOLVED IN. THE QUESTIONS ARE GENERAL WITH LOTS OF FLEXIBILITY SO IF THERE ARE CERTAIN AREAS WE WANT TO PURSUE WE CAN DO THAT.

Interview Questions:

1. Generally, how do you feel about planning for education in Alberta? At the provincial level? At the school district level? At the school level?
2. Generally how do you feel about the need for change in how the high school programs are provided to students in the county? In this school?
3. Who do you think should have the major responsibility for planning how the high school programs are to be provided to students in the school?
4. How do you feel about being involved in the school's strategic planning project?

5. What was your reaction to the planning session in February?

6. How do you feel about the group or stakeholder representation on the planning team?

    - students
    - parents
    - community members
    - central office
    - board members.

7. Were there aspects of the strategic planning session you found challenging?

8. What do you think are the strengths of the strategic planning project? What are the shortcomings?

9. How effective do you feel the strategic planning session was in encouraging you and other participants to share concerns, contribute ideas, knowledge and expertise?

10. Do you think the strategic planning session got participants involved in examining and discussing the real issues of high schools today? The critical issues for you? The objectives? The strategies?

11. What effect do you think the school system strategic plan had on the planning process?

12. How do you think the leadership and decision-making aspects of strategic planning should be handled? What effect do you think the planning might have on those processes in the school in the future?

13. What do you think about the potential for school-based strategic planning to result in changes to the way the high school program is provided to students in your school?

14. Do you think this kind of strategic planning has any potential for other groups or schools within, and maybe outside, the Strathcona school district?

15. What do you feel are the advantages or disadvantages or both of using facilitators from inside the school system?
16. What do you think was the effect of having a collaborative researcher present observing, taking notes and recording?
17. Have you seen the materials that were developed at the planning session? How do you feel about the product thus far?
18. Any other comments, ideas or opinions you would like to share about the school's strategic planning project or strategic planning in general or planning for education in general?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME AND OPINIONS. WHEN THE STUDY IS COMPLETED, AT LEAST ONE COPY WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SCHOOL FOR ANYONE INTERESTED IN READING IT.

Appendix B

Staff Questionnaire

March 19, 1992

Dear Staff Member:

Attached is a staff questionnaire which is one of the methods for collecting information in our study on school-based planning. Your views are very significant to the study. As you may not be involved in an interview, I would appreciate obtaining your opinions through this questionnaire. It should take only a few minutes of your time. There are no names or numbers on the questionnaire in order to ensure individual confidentiality. The consolidated results will be a part of the entire study which will be made available to the staff upon completion next fall. Please return the completed document to the brown envelope by APRIL 15, 1992. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jackie Gee,
Doctoral student
Department of Educational Administration
University of Alberta, Edmonton

Staff Questionnaire

School-based Strategic Planning

Study Coordinator: Jacqueline Gee, Doctoral student, Department of Educational Administration
University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

PLEASE CIRCLE THE NUMBER OPPOSITE THE APPROPRIATE RESPONSE.

1. Which one of the following best describes your major job assignment?

   1. Teacher
   2. Counsellor
   3. Department head
   4. Assistant principal
   5. Library/laboratory assistant
   6. Secretarial/clerical support

2. How long you have worked for this district?

   1. 1 - 5 years
   2. 6 - 10 years
   3. 11 - 15 years
   4. 16 - 20 years
   5. 21 - 25 years
   6. More than 25 years

3. How long you have worked at this High School?

   1. 1 - 5 years
   2. 6 - 10 years
   3. 11 - 15 years
   4. 16 - 20 years
   5. 21 - 25 years
   6. More than 25 years

4. Which one of the following best describes your level of **familiarity** with the **Strategic Plan**?

   1. I am not aware of the Plan.
   2. I am aware there is a Plan.
   3. I am familiar with the highlights of the Plan.
   4. I have studied the Plan.

5. Which one of the following best describes your **involvement** with the **Strategic Plan**?
   1. Member of the Planning Team
   2. Member of an Action Team
   3. Member of an Implementation Committee
   4. Not involved

6. Which one of the following best describes **your desired involvement** in the **High School** strategic planning project?

   1. Action Team Leader
   2. Member of an Action Team
   3. Member of staff deciding to initiate and accept or reject the Plan
   4. No involvement

7. Which one of the following best describes your **attitude** about the **school-based strategic planning**

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

8. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about **parents** being involved in the **school strategic planning team**?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

9. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about **students** being involved in the **school strategic planning team**?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

10. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about **community members** being involved in the **school strategic planning team**?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

11. Which one of the following best describes how you would feel about **a central office representative** being involved in the **school strategic planning team**?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

12. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about the **need for change** high school program is provided to students in your school?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

13. Which one of the following best describes **who** you feel **should** have the **major** responsibility for planning **how** the program is to be provided to students in your school?

   1. Board of Education
   2. Superintendent
   3. School administration and Staff
   4. Specialist department in the school
   5. School administration, Staff, Students
   6. School administration, Staff, School Advisory Council
   7. School administration, Staff, Students, School Advisory Council

14. Which one of the following best describes how you feel about the potential for **school-based strategic planning to result in changes** to the way the high school program is provided to students in your school?

   1. Very negative 2. Somewhat negative 3. Neutral 4. Somewhat positive 5. Very positive

15. Which one of the following best describes **who** you feel should make the decision about **how** the school planning process is to be done?

    1. Principal
    2. Principal and Administration Team
    3. Principal and Staff
    4. Principal, Staff and Student Council
    5. Principal, Staff and School Advisory Council
    6. Principal, Staff, Student Council, and School Advisory Council
    7. Superintendent
    8. Board of Education

16. What do you perceive to be the major differences and/or similarities in the **present annual school planning process** and the **strategic planning process** your school is undertaking?

    Differences

    Similarities

17. Comments:

    Please provide any comments you wish to make about the matters addressed above.

    Use the back of the page if additional space is required.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE. PLEASE RETURN BY APRIL 15, 1992.

Appendix C

INTERVIEW FORM FOR THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Opening Comments:

As you know, I am working on an educational doctorate at the University of Alberta this year. My research study addresses the significance of stakeholder involvement in the strategic planning process at the school level within the context of system and Alberta Education planning processes. (Discss framework) One of the requirements of the program is a field experience placement. My placement in Alberta Education has afforded me the opportunity to learn and gather data about the planning processes of Alberta Education. My position has enabled me to be involved in the system Strategic Planning Process but I want to collect information from a broader perspective than my own of the process. So I'd interested in your views on the topic.

The information you provide individually will be kept confidential. All interview information will be analyzed and consolidated into the system context for the entire study. I will be providing the superintendent with a copy of the consolidated information. I would like to tape record the interview if you have no objections. The interview will be semi-structured. The questions are general with lots of flexibility so if there are certain areas we want to pursue, we can do that.

Interview Questions:

1. Generally, how do you feel about the planning for education that is presently occurring in Alberta?
2. What do you believe should be the role of the school board in planning for education at the system level?
3. What do you believe should be the role of the school board in planning for education at the school level?

4. The Board of Education strategic planning process has been in place for approximately two years now. Why do you think the process was initiated when it was?
5. How do you feel about being involved in the school's strategic planning project? (if the individual was involved in the planning or action teams).
6. How do you feel about stakeholders involvement in the planning process? The representation on the Planning Team and/or the Action Teams? Are there stakeholders that might/should have been involved, in your opinion, that were not?
7. What do you believe is or will be the effect of involving stakeholders in the process?
8. What was your reaction to the last planning update in February at the Wilderness Center? (if individual involved)
9. Have there been aspects of the strategic planning that you found challenging?
10. What do you think are the strengths of the strategic planning project? What are the shortcomings?
11. How effective do you feel the strategic planning session was in enabling you and other participants to share concerns, contribute ideas, knowledge and expertise? (if involved)
12. Do you think the strategic planning process resulted in examining and discussing the real issues of schools today? The critical issues for you?
13. How do you feel about the quality of the document? The use of it?
14. Has the plan, Toward 2000, ever been of use to you personally? If so, in what way?
15. What effect do you think the plan, Toward 2000, is having on the school system? on the community at large? In your perception, how is it working?
16. Any other comments?

Appendix D

INTERVIEW FORMAT FOR ALBERTA EDUCATION

Opening Comments:

As you know, I am working on an educational doctorate at the University of Alberta this year. One of the requirements of the program is a field experience placement. My placement here in Alberta Education has afforded me the opportunity to learn and gather data about the planning processes of Alberta Education. My research study addresses the significance of stakeholder involvement in the strategic planning process at the school level within the context of system and Alberta Education planning processes.

The information you provide individually will be kept confidential. I will be providing the Deputy Minister with a summary of my findings.

Interview Questions:

1. Generally, how do you feel about the kind of planning for change that is done for education in Alberta? At the provincial level? At the school district level? At the school level?
2. What planning processes do you feel would be effective at the department level?
3. What aspects of federal or provincial government planning do you see directly affecting the planning that is done?
4. How does the planning of your division integrate with the rest of the planning process?
5. How effective do you feel the planning process is in encouraging you and other participants to share concerns, contribute ideas, knowledge and expertise?
6. Do you think the planning process gets participants involved in examining and discussing the real issues of education today? The critical issues for you? The goals and strategies?

7. Who do you think should have the major responsibility for planning the school programs are to be provided to students in the school?

8. What do you believe should be the ideal role for the department? for districts? for schools?

9. What are your thoughts about the annual planning session that the department holds? Is there a sense of working together toward common, shared goals?

10. How do you feel about stakeholder involvement in the planning process?

    - students
    - parents
    - community members
    - central office
    - trustees

11. What are your views on proactive as opposed to reactive involvement of stakeholders in the planning process as opposed to reactive involvement?

12. Other comments?

Appendix E

Chapter Four Outline

The Case Study

Alberta Education: Part One

A. The Nature of the Organization

1. The External Environment

   - separate economic and social policy
   - government funding and priorities
   - consideration of multi-year planning
   - national prosperity initiatives

2. The Role of Alberta Education

   - keep education on political agenda
   - influence linkage of finances to policy
   - holder of the VISION, forging new values and forcing change
   - create environment/model for change
   - establish expectations, policy and accountability
   - empower stakeholders

3. The Internal Climate in Alberta Education

   - Education Officials decision-makers
   - fragmentation, lack of sense of purpose, direction
   - matrix management in chaos
   - results— focus hard work

B. Planning for Change in the Organization

1. Beliefs About Planning

   (a) What is planning for change?
   - definite goals of leader
   - moving from what is to what will be
   - using political opportunity
   - differing perspectives/styles of senior officials

   (b) Why is planning necessary?
   - mechanism to discuss values
   - problem-solving
   - priorities are serious problems

   (c) Who should be responsible for planning?
   - planning division raises issues
   - task teams for budget
   - division planning model

  - planner needs transferred authority

2. Attitudes About Stakeholder Involvement

   (a) Why Not?
      - many different ways to involve
      - too many interest groups
      - lack of stakeholder satisfaction
      - disillusionment with results of stakeholder satisfaction
      - focus groups

   (b) Who?
      - caucus and cabinet
      - Deans, ASBA, ATA
      - CASS
      - directors, associate directors,
      - school jurisdictions

3. The Planning Methodology Used in Alberta Education

   (a) Personal reactions
      - VISION and Report are it
      - goals and priorities
      - formal budget process

   (b) Challenges
      - political change in Ministers
      - not an orderly approach
      - tries different strategic planning processes each year
      - planning division causes segregation
      - organizational resistance

   (c) Strengths
      - VISION
      - formal process for budget
      - division planning model in place
      - getting better
      - communication plans for initiatives

   (d) Weaknesses
      - annual sessions not useful
      - no single process
      - reactive mode
      - not collaborative
      - no long term planning

The School: Part Three

A. The Nature of the Organization

1. The External Environment

    (a) Alberta Education
    - questionable knowledge base for decisions
    - top-down approach
    - academic emphasis

    (b) The School District
    - level of involvement
    - planning leadership
    - resources support
    - results focus/school autonomy

    (c) Societal Expectations
    - image of the school
    - expectations of the school
    - cultural comparisons

2. The Role of the School

    (a) Provision of the basics
    - basic education program
    - basic skills of learning

    (b) Accountable to the community
    - test results limit teacher risk-taking
    - district standards, responsibility
    - community expectations

    (c) Other roles
    - broad program exposure
    - new delivery methods
    - develop student responsibility

3. The Internal Climate of the School

    (a) Leadership style

    (b) Role of the teacher (old role- teaching curriculum, new- planning delivery)

    (c) Aspects of change
    - the change process
    - teacher readiness
    - inhibiting factors
    - structural changes needed (these may be recommendations)
    - changing nature of students
    - Partnerships

B. Planning for Change in the Organization

1. Beliefs About Planning

   (a) What is Planning for Change?
      - long-term new for schools
      - using opportunities available
      - using input from teachers/PR

   (b) Why is it necessary?
      - preparation for changes
      - appropriateness for school
      - address emerging problems (Alta. Ed. —priorities are problems)
      - integration of home, school, and community
      - re-energize staff

   (c) Who should be responsible for planning in the organization?
      - principal
      - school
      - school and parents
      - (include school questionnaire)

2. Attitudes about Stakeholder Involvement

   (a) Why?
      - demystifies school for parents
      - leadership role for business
      - valuable outsider perspective, ideas

   (b) Who?
      - parents
      - students
      - community
      - insiders
      - teachers
      - business

3. The Planning Methodology Used in the School

   (a) Personal reactions
      - change occurred
      - positive
      - anxiety
      - strenuous

   (b) Stakeholder representation
      - trustees
      - business
      - students
      - central office
      - parents
      - teachers

(c) Challenges
- objectives and strategies
- synthesizing information
- communication concerns
- coming to consensus
- time constraints
- lack of control
- terminology

(d) Shortcomings
- communication
- lack of preparation
- time constraints
- lack of representation
- facilitation
- no literature base
- top-down initiative

(e) Strengths
- structure/discipline of process
- leadership initiative
- involvement of others
- interaction
- personal growth
- buy-in (support) of staff
- location

(f) Individual contribution
- effective
- quite effective
- built-in barriers

(g) Critical issues
- unsure
- positive
- negative

(h) Effect of District Plan
- some effect
- little/no effect
- unsure

(i) Quality of the product
- positive
- favorable w/suggestions
- disappointment

(j) Facilitation
- positive climate
- insider advantage
- outsider advantage
- both advantage
- negative